

The  
American  
Mind  
in  
Action



Harvey  
O'Higgins



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THE AMERICAN MIND  
IN ACTION







# THE AMERICAN MIND IN ACTION

By  
Harvey O'Higgins  
and  
Edward H. Reede, M.D.



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IN ACTION

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# THE AMERICAN MIND IN ACTION

## I. *In General*

PERHAPS there is no such thing as an American mind. Perhaps—in the sense of the humorist who complained that the country had weather but no climate—the variety among Americans is so great and the mass of the people so little homogeneous, that no sort of common psychology can be rightly imputed to them. Nevertheless, there are certain traits and mental qualities that are accepted as characteristically American; and when the critic of America assembles those traits and mental qualities together into a sort of synthetic man, he is commonly allowed to consider this creature of his selective fancy a typical American with a typical American mind.

It is agreed, for example, that the typical American is at once the most shrewdly practical of men and the most sentimentally idealistic. It is agreed that he is an excellent business man, but a much less excellent artist—or, at least, the superior quality of his intellect in affairs of business and industry is obvious to his foreign critics, and the inferior quality of his achievement in art and literature is equally admitted by the world. It is pointed out that he is an inventor, but not a scientist. It is observed that he is one of the most prosperous and comfortable of mankind, yet

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seems among the least contented; that he pursues amusement with a passionate longing for distraction, but gets little apparent joy out of his play; that he is endlessly driven by an ambition to succeed in life, and seems quite unable to rest happy in any success, no matter how complete and stable; that he appears to have great personal initiative and self-reliance, but no calm assurance and serene self-confidence; that he is extraordinarily sensitive to foreign criticism; that he continually falls back upon what is called "American bluff"; that he is persecuted by all the imps of worry, anxiety, restlessness, and haste; that in spite of his famous American humor, his laughter shows little of the spontaneous gayety that arises from the joy of living; and so forth.

Above all, to the foreigner, the typical American is essentially Puritan. Every visitor from abroad is at once struck by the Puritan aspects of American life. Every foreign critic of American literature and American art judges them Puritanical. Americans know that they have softened the original harshness of the Puritan code and greatly liberalized their outlook on life by absorbing foreign stock and assimilating foreign ideas; and they are more aware of their improvement in these respects than their critics seem to be; but there is no denying that American civilization is of Puritan origin, and that Puritan traditions and ways of thought still determine the chief differences between American life and foreign modes and morals. And it is in these traditions and ways of thought that the new psychology finds its first clew to an explanation of some of the peculiar idiosyncrasies and contradictions of the so-called American mind.

The New England Puritans saw life as a continual war between the Flesh and the Spirit. They were



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Pauline Christians, and Saint Paul might have been writing of them when he wrote of himself, in his Epistle to the Romans; "I find then a law that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? . . . So, then, with the mind, I myself serve the law of God: but with the flesh the law of sin." And that Pauline conflict—that Puritan conflict—between the mind and the members, is recognized by science, now, as a conflict between the intellectual ideals of the conscious mind and the compulsive urgings of natural instincts moving in the subconscious mind.

The instincts which the Puritan set himself most determinedly to repress were the most potent instincts of ordinary healthy life. They were the sex instinct and those responses to the instinct of self-assertion that show in the form of anger, envy, emulation, pride, ambition, and so forth. Above all, to the Puritan as to Paul, sex was sin. "Now," Paul declares, "the works of the Flesh are manifest, which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of which I tell you that they which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God." And observe that these sins are not sins of action alone; half of them are sins of thought. The instincts were not merely to be prevented from impelling to sinful action; they were to be stopped from getting into the conscious mind,

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as sinful thoughts; they were to be dammed up in the subconscious mind, with all their undrained energy and all their unrelieved tension.

The Puritan, in fact, was attempting what we now know to be practically impossible. The conscious mind can easily control instinctive action; it cannot wholly control instinctive thought. It can control the action the more easily if it allows the thought into the conscious mind, where it appears to drain off the energy somewhat and relieve the tension. The Puritan could not permit himself the safety valve of this drainage. When his instinctive thoughts came into consciousness, they filled him with a fear of eternal punishment, a feeling of guilt, a conviction of baseness, a ceaseless anxiety from which he rarely obtained any secure escape. This is the key to the Puritan character and to the code of social conduct which he set. At his worst, he had a bad case of "floating anxiety," as physicians now call it; his repressions, in various disguises, leaked into his mind poisonously, and he "blew up" under the strain in an appalling way. At his best, he was likely to be a worried, sour faced, self-persecuted, joyless hypochondriac.

Fortunately, the New England Puritans came to a country where an unconquered wilderness gave them an outlet, in physical labor, for some of the energy which their repressions had stored up in them. They had first gone from England to Holland and formed a colony there, which failed to prosper. Their leader, Bradford, wrote that his unsuccess in the business of silk-dyeing in Holland was a punishment of God upon him, because, "in the midst of worldly cares," he had suffered his inward piety to fall into certain "decays." Any calamity, any failure, any ill luck was similarly attributed by the Puritan to divine displeasure. And

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when, in the New World, the colony began to succeed, its prosperity was equally looked upon as an evidence of God's favor. Industry, which begat prosperity, became, therefore, a public virtue. It also promoted a feeling of personal security to counteract the Puritan's inner fears; and since it relieved repressions somewhat, by draining off energy, it was doubly approved by the individual's satisfaction and the community's respect. Idleness became a dangerous sin. "For Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do." Industry ranked as a cardinal Puritan virtue. Indeed, outside of the rites of self-denial, good conduct became largely a matter of industry, and labor attained a degree of esteem that it had never known in any other community.

It is still true of the typical American that industry is a virtue to him and idleness a vice. In this respect he is quite unlike his nearest relative, the typical Englishman, who has the aristocratic tradition that a gentleman is necessarily a man of leisure. To the average Englishman, work—unless in the pursuit of sport—is a sort of curse. He does not give himself up wholly to his business; he keeps a hobby, too, for after hours. He has rarely the American's singleness of devotion to his means of livelihood. To an Englishman, business is "of his life a thing apart," but it is often the American's whole existence. Few Englishmen would think of speaking of the rich, in reproach, as "the idle rich." And, to the new psychology, all this does not seem to be merely the effect of a class tradition; it appears probable that the American's condemnation of idleness is due to the same subconscious causes that operated in his Puritan predecessors.

To the Puritans, industry was a cardinal virtue, and Heaven was known to have blessed their work when



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they achieved a worldly well-being. Their great and almost their only holiday was the Thanksgiving Day, on which they returned thanks to Providence for their prosperity. To the new psychology, it is not a mere accident that the President of the United States still dignifies this celebration by a proclamation appointing the day and calling on the citizens to solemnize it. Prosperity, to the average American, is still, vaguely, a blessing on his virtue, and he has still an almost religious reverence for worldly success. Ill luck and continued misfortune still carry for him a dim suspicion of heavenly disfavor. Nothing succeeds with him like success; nothing so forfeits his respect as failure. It is as if an idea that was a conviction of faith in the Puritan had become, by tradition, an unconscious habit of mind in the modern American and formed an unpleasant national trait which many of his popular heroes, when they have failed—even in a noble endeavor—have had cause to deplore.

But though the early Puritan believed prosperity to be a proof of divine favor—and prayed for it and gave thanks for it—he did not trust to prayer alone to attain it; he added the best efforts of his industry. “God helps him who helps himself” is a Puritan maxim derived through Franklin from the Puritan poet, Herbert. So the Puritans believed thoroughly in what they called “the use of means.” Their leader, Bradford, almost died of rheumatism in the winter of 1620; and he wrote (January 21, 1621) that he “grew a little better towards night, and in time, through God’s mercy in the use of means, recovered.” Industry was a virtue; the use of means was necessary to obtain God’s help; and prosperity was the evidence of His favor. Consequently, a certain unscrupulousness in the means used to obtain prosperity was liable to be overlooked. In-

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deed, the Puritan's scruples of conscience were limited by a specialized idea of sin—the Pauline idea—the idea of sin as a pleasure of the senses, not an idea of sin as an injury to others. Almost on the day of the landing of the Pilgrims, they stole corn from the Indians. Predatoriness was never stigmatized among them with any color of reprobation. Predatoriness does not carry any criminal stigma yet in the mind of the average American; and this is another of his characteristics that perplexes the foreigner.

Most important of all, the Puritans had revolted against every ceremonial device by which the older religions freed the conscious mind from its conviction of sin. They had abandoned, as a sacerdotal trick or a superstitious delusion, every ritualistic means of grace, such as confession and absolution. Only God could free the Puritan of guilt through his conscience. He had revolted also against the belief in a clergy that could interpret for him the word of God infallibly, so that he was compelled to hold his religious beliefs at his own personal risk in the world to come. On top of this his repressed instinctive impulses continually broke in upon his consciousness and had to be fought back. He could arrive at no inner peace. His conscience forever accused him. His prosperity, though a proof of God's favor, left him still uneasy, because worldly prosperity is an uncertain thing, always menaced by disaster. But prosperity earned for him the respect of his neighbors. So did the practice of self-denial. And reputation, being visibly expressed in the regard of the community, was a great anodyne and easement of his inner apprehensions. Hence a good reputation became a most desirable thing; the opinion of his fellows gained an abnormal authority over him; and the will of the majority grew to have a mystical power. It still

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has that power recognizably in the American civilization, and the foreigner marvels at it.

Since there was among the Puritans no priestly class to act as the authorized interpreters of the Scriptures, it was necessary that every one should have sufficient education to be able to read and understand the Bible. "So much instruction as this," says Fiske, "was assumed to be a sacred duty which the community owed to every child born within its jurisdiction." To the Puritans, ignorance was the source of superstition in religion and the stronghold of "despotism in politics"; so they "cultivated knowledge with might and main." By so doing they established in America a characteristic belief in the magical power of education. And when education itself destroyed their theocratic ideal of society and freed the people from the conscious fear of a Puritan divinity, education earned a new approval as a liberator in the popular mind.

To sum up, then, the Puritan's inner life was one of immense psychic anxiety—of soul-fear. His reserved energy, driven by that anxiety, attacked the adversities of a rigorous climate, a niggardly soil, savage enemies, and the ruthless competition of his own kind; and these adversities, instead of breaking him, toughened and tempered and sharpened to the keenest cutting edge all the faculties of his intellect. They produced "Yankee smartness." Every sensual pleasure was sinful to the Puritan; he would have none of the poetry, the music, or the art that gives pleasure through the senses; and the American civilization is still distinguished by its lack of these things. The Puritan did not play games, since play is too nearly akin to idleness; and the modern American still commonly finds it necessary to defend his golf or his baseball with the excuse that it is good for him because it keeps him out in the



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open air. The Puritan expressed none of the joy of living that arises from the healthy satisfaction of animal instincts; neither do his modern descendants. And he gave the world none of those dreams, either of philosophic revery or of imaginative art, which are secreted in the quiet of a contented subconsciousness.

There was another American type that struggled for a long time with the Puritan for leadership. This was the Virginian. He was of the stock of the English country squire who satisfied his soul with the spiritual consolations of a liberal clergy—liberal, that is, outside of dogma—and lived a more rich and varied life of amusement and aristocratic occupation. Implanted in Virginia, and supported by slave labor, he developed a civilization that had the conscious ideals of a sort of pastoral chivalry. His religion was more a matter of ceremonial than was the Puritan's. His conduct was regulated by more genial ideals—ideals, chiefly, of gentlemanly honor. At his best, his cardinal traits were bravery, loyalty to his friends and kinsmen, regard for womanly chastity, and a contempt for trade. A conscious security in his way of life and the subconscious security of instinctive emotions not too rigorously repressed saved him from the endless anxieties that drove the Puritans. If he had become the dominant type in the nation, American life and history might have been very different.

The Puritan, of course, defeated him. That was sure to happen in an industrial democracy. Unremitting toil and keen dealing and untiring application put the Puritan into positions of conspicuous success where even his least admirable qualities aroused the instinct of imitation in others. Puritan ideals of godly toil and blessed prosperity became the dominant ideals of the land. And no life has ever lent itself to the formation

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of a national ideal with greater facility. There was no caste system to divide the social mass into varying class aspirations. The canal boy became the President, the errand boy the banker, the clerk the head of the trading corporation, the laborer the captain of industry. The ideal of the highest class could be followed by a member of the lowest as a guiding star to his ambition, and a particular class-purpose in life could become as general and popular as a classy fad in clothes. Such an ideal, once formed, could be held up to all children by all parents, taught to youth by educators, fed to the people in their popular reading, and diligently realized by energetic young ambition with sufficient success to establish it in the habits and customs and traditions of the nation.

The Puritans in England had no such free field for the sowing and spread of their ideals. The aristocratic tradition and the Established Church opposed them. They triumphed in certain classes of society; they affected the national life and the national culture obviously, if we compare these with continental modes and morals; and Puritan ideals are even more potent in some of the British colonies than in England itself. (In Canada, for instance, the Scotch Calvinist is so like the American Puritan that it is not easy for a casual visitor to see the difference between the two communities.) Consequently, much that we are writing here is partially true of certain types of what we call the Anglo-Saxon, in all parts of the world. But it is only in America that natural conditions and economic influences have made it possible for Puritan thought to become national thought and to compose a popular culture after its own model.

We need not follow the gradual process by which the first rigidity of the Puritan faith in America was

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relaxed in the movement of the people westward. The pioneer in the wilderness escaped from the control of the Puritan leaders, but he did not escape from the influence of their ideals, which he took with him. The advent of revivalistic religions freed him somewhat from the self-persecuting conviction of sin; for, at the moment of conversion, he had the joy of a security derived from crowd ecstasy. But the compulsion to an impossible sinlessness of thought remained the same as with the Puritan; the feeling of security wore away; and the anxieties of conscience had to be relieved by frequent "revivals." Even so, the pioneer became a much more joyful ascetic than the Puritan had been. His inner life of idealism was less a matter of Puritan ritualism and more a matter of a Sir Galahad type of purity. He was an intense individualist, depending on his own strength and his virtue and God's favor for success. He developed a strong sense of unconquerable free will and initiative. He drained off in labor the stored energies of his repressions, but his repressions were very great, and his psychic anxiety—his soul fear—was only a degree less insistent than the Puritan's.

That condition of blind repression and worried insecurity seems still to be the subconscious state of the typical American. Education has merely destroyed for him the efficacy of whatever religious devices the earlier generations used in order to free the conscious mind from its conviction of sin. His education has done nothing, as yet, to settle the old quarrel between his conscious ideals and his subconscious impulses. He is still the victim of attempted repressions of instinctive thought, and he still suffers with all the inevitable tensions and anxieties of reservoired energy. He is still given a very Puritan religious training in his early youth; and whatever conscious revolt he makes after-

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ward, his subconscious mind—the mind of his childhood—continues full of the inescapable soul fear of his first admonishments. So he throws himself into work, into business, into the activities of his profession, even into competitive games, with a concentration and an application that have never been equaled.

His mind, as Henry Adams said, “exasperates a European much as a buzz saw might exasperate a pine forest.” It is a “mere cutting instrument, practical, economical, sharp, and direct.” It is commonly set to achieve success, as the Puritan’s was, by a use of means no more scrupulous than the Puritan’s. Driven by an anxiety akin to the Puritan’s, it applies itself with an untiring perseverance to overcoming obstacles, and with a famous inventiveness to outflanking them. Consequently, in industry, in prosperity, in diffusion of wealth and physical comfort, there is no nation to challenge the United States. That is the great achievement of the Puritan tradition. The Puritan created a Frankenstein monster in his fear of the Flesh, but he found a way to set that monster to work, on the pioneer roads of a new civilization, with an energy that has astonished mankind. No such combination of an implacable psychic drive and an unlimited physical opportunity had ever been known in the world before, and it is scarcely possible that circumstances will ever conspire to produce it again.

Life, however, is by no means so large and free in America now as it was in the pioneer days. Opportunity is no longer unlimited. Occupations have become narrower. They do not offer as wide a sluiceway for the instinctive energies that are being dammed up. These get some escape in athletics, sports, and games, and they drain off in futile haste and restlessness, but their great leakage is into the channels of the conscious



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mind. Hence, worry—the pet psychological vice of the modern American.

Worry is a “displaced anxiety”; the real source of it is concealed in the subconscious mind; the conscious mind attaches it to one innocent circumstance after another, and then struggles vainly to be rid of it by reforming those circumstances. Americans worry especially about their healths, and they have made the corner drug store a national institution; nowhere else in the world will you find it flourishing so gayly or the patent medicine so popular. They are persecuted by business worries; but here there is a very obvious displacement, for if you take the typical American away from his business, he worries to death. Force him to retire in comfortable idleness and he sinks into a depression not unlike the Puritan’s conviction of sin. He has no rich inner life, based on self-knowledge and security, to draw upon with satisfaction in retirement. He prefers to die in harness rather than face the horror of meditative thought. For the same reason, he is the greatest newspaper reader in the world and he snatches up a paper in any interval of leisure that leaves him free to “loaf and invite his soul.” His soul is the last thing he would invite; when he meets it, that is the day of judgment for him. He takes his holidays in the excitements of travel, which distracts him from himself; and the automobile has become such a mad passion with him that its popularity amazes the foreigner.

His fiction and his theater betray his state of mind. He wants stories always of success. He must have a hero who “does things.” He cannot endure the art that pictures his own problems; he reads and goes to the theater to escape from himself. He particularly likes to escape from his Puritan repression of the instinct of sex, but his art has to be very sly about that, in order

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to evade his own moral censorship; hence the popularity of those novels and plays which prove that the wages of sin is death, but go through a thorough exposure of the sinful life in accomplishing their moral purpose. Necessarily, these aspects of American art are childish to the foreigner. It is a law of repression that a repressed instinct tends to take the regressive forms of an infantile expression. The sex instinct in modern American life consequently shows itself most strikingly in the infantile forms of display and curiosity, particularly display in woman's dress and curiosity about the morals of others. The latter is most obvious in the interest in newspaper scandal and salacious court cases, and in the gossip that is the curse of the small American town.

What the typical American might have become if he had not had the impulsion to industrial effort is tragically evident in the autobiography of Henry Adams, from which we have quoted above. He was the descendant of a long line of conspicuous Puritans. His story is the story of a mind in which subconscious anxiety, instead of being a driving force to conscious effort, has become a doubt that blocks all effort. He is describing himself when he writes: "The habit of doubt; of distrusting his own judgment and of totally rejecting the judgment of the world; the tendency to regard every question as open; the hesitation to act except as a choice of evils; the shirking of responsibility; the love of line, form, quality; the horror of ennui; the passion for companionship and the antipathy to society—all these are well-known qualities of New England character." This is the stultification from which the American has been saved by having the adversities of the wilderness to contend with and subdue.

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Again Henry Adams writes: "Resistance to something was the law of New England nature; the boy" (meaning himself) "looked out upon the world with the instinct of resistance; for numberless generations, his predecessors had viewed the world chiefly as a thing to be reformed, filled with evil forces to be abolished, and they saw no reason to suppose that they had wholly succeeded in the abolition; the duty was unchanged. That duty implied not only resistance to evil but hatred of it. . . . The New-Englander had learned . . . to love the pleasure of hating—oneself if no better victim offered." And here we make a deeper cut into the vitals of the American mind.

The Puritan lived in a state of war with his instinctive self, which he regarded as his evil self tempting him to live according to the law of the Flesh when he wished to live according to the Pauline law of God. He hated the Flesh in himself and he hated even more fiercely that Flesh appearing as the vices of others. Hence he was a great persecutor, a strong vice-crusader, the best of witch-hunters. The more Puritanical the modern American is, the more he has of these vice-crusading qualities. It is useless to tell such a man to love his neighbor as himself; he hates so much of himself. His hate, reservoird within him, gets its drainage in raids on vice, in the prosecutions and suppressions carried on by anti-vice societies, and in the campaigns of reform that call for the punishment of evil-doers. Nowhere else in the world could modern life produce such characters as America's Anthony Comstocks.

The fear of failure seems to have replaced the Puritan fear of sinfulness in the less orthodox American; and with him the worldly success that was an evidence of divine favor to the Puritans has become an end in

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itself. He sees his instinctive urgings as a weakness impeding his conscious mind in its industry and application. He hates that weakness and is afraid of it. Inefficiency in himself has taken on the aspects of the old Flesh that he must fight. He projects his hatred and fear of himself upon all obstacles to success, upon all rivals who keep him back, and upon all philosophies and modes of thought that threaten his prosperity. There, probably, we have the explanation of his recent unexpected virulence against all radicals and his astonishing panic about a revolt of the reds, and his sympathy with a campaign of suppression that has had no equal in America since the Puritan witch-hunts.

These reservoired hates and fears have periodical outbursts that puzzle the rest of the world. An election campaign is such an occasion. It is an axiom of American politics that a man is not elected by his friends, but by his opponent's enemies. The parties vie in accusations that are designed to arouse public animosity; and the more virulence there is in the campaign, the calmer the national atmosphere seems to be after the election. Any American who is striving to effect a reform finds it easier to stir up hate and anger against the evil-doer than to prepare the way for the constructive measures that shall cure the evil; and the public interest commonly ends when the emotion has been relieved—and the evil-doer has been reproved—by the reformer's election to office.

It is interesting to see an American audience release their hidden fears and angers before a moving picture or a stage play in which the defeat of villany and the triumph of virtue transport them into a security which they cannot attain in their own conflict. Observe their bewilderment before a Russian tragedy in which the author and his native audience drain off their psychic



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despairs. Or see the American audience's puzzled disappointment at the curtain of one of Shakespeare's later comedies in which he forgives the villain, with a tolerance that is inexplicable, and pairs off villainy with virtue in an indiscriminately happy ending.

The Puritans, in their doubt and insecurity, came to the Pauline decision "Having done all, to stand," resting the issue on God's justice. As they succeeded, their reliance on God increased, and they developed a self-reliance which, having appeased God, did its best. This attitude of self-reliance became the mark of the man whose conscience was at rest, the attitude of the godly and successful. It was the pose of superiority. It was imitated and assumed. It has become a tradition of the typical American—to appear self-reliant, of an indomitable will. His very psychic insecurity demands that exterior. It is "keeping up a front" as a secure and successful man. It is "American bluff." What it covers is shown by the fact that his *bête noire* is the "yellow streak." He is afraid of his fears—not knowing that fear is universal—and he confuses fear with cowardice. His great social defect is his self-consciousness, which is an instinctive fear reaction founded on the belief that the other fellow is the better man. And out of this self-conscious fear of inferiority comes his sensitiveness to foreign criticism. Contrast it with the governing Englishman's pretense that he is a "duffer"—that the English only "muddle through" to success—and put that pretense of modesty beside his colossal indifference to what any foreigner may think of him.

The average Englishman represses his emotion because he follows the governing class's tradition that emotionalism is a weakness incompatible with the standards of the fighting man, the knight of chivalry.

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But the conspicuously great artists of England have not come from the governing class; they do not follow the governing class's ideal of a stoical suppression of emotion; and it is this trait in them that so often makes them seem to the class-conscious Englishman what he calls "bounders." It is curiously different with Americans. All classes of Americans repress emotion in so far as they repress their instincts. Emotion is always instinctive emotion. There is no such thing as an emotion of intellect alone, arising in the conscious mind. Emotions are always aroused by the urging of an instinct; and they are always purposeful to instinct, because they are the mental tensions that move us to instinctive actions. The typical American artist, repressing his instincts, cannot drift into the emotional creations that are the very stuff of artistic thought. He has the intellectual appreciation of "line, form, quality," which Henry Adams noted in the *New-Englander*; and in all the merely intelligent qualities of art he is a past master. But in emotional quality he is commonly thin, and the foreigner is right when he considers this thinness Puritanical. That seems to be true even of the chief pride of American art, the painter Whistler. It was his religion that painting was wholly an affair of color. "A great picture," he declared, "is a great picture on the palette." And when he wrote of his portrait of his mother he called it "an arrangement in gray and black" and expressly repudiated the instinctive emotion that showed in the work, even though it was obviously this emotion that made the portrait his masterpiece.

In the same way, the typical American cannot achieve the larger curiosities of scientific speculation. He is a famous adept in applying the discoveries of others to practical ends, but he is usually no discoverer

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himself, because he cannot wander into the idle, undirected, impractical explorations of the meditative mind. Edison was the model American scientist when he replied, virtuously (to a press report that he was busy with some scientific investigations), "I have never made it a practice to work on any line not purely practical and useful." The imagination of science, like the imagination of art, is largely inhibited to the typical American, not only by his traditions of industry and application and worldly success, but by the inability of the anxious American mind to repose in any dreamy quietude. The great mass of Americans are, as it were, a people with a tradition that they must sleep only three hours a day—and proud of their wakefulness—when, as a matter of fact, they have insomnia, caused by subconscious anxiety; and they can neither sleep nor dream.

The joy of living is equally inhibited to them. Emotions are mental tensions, accompanied often by bodily discomfort, acting for a purpose, involuntarily and instinctively aroused. Joy, elation, ecstasy are tones of feeling that result from the relieving of these emotional tensions; their unrelief produces anxiety, depression, or even despair. The continental *joie de vivre* is impossible to the average American because so many of its elements of instinctive satisfaction are hedged off from him by Puritanical taboos. He gets a great deal of pleasure out of work, out of success over his competitors, out of victories that relieve unconscious stores of hatred and anger, out of excitements that make him momentarily forget himself. But even a mild enduring contentment is scarcely possible to him—to say nothing of that contented joy in living which comes of healthy instincts at peace in their healthful satisfaction.

The Puritan man, as we have said, needed to obtain

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the shelter of an assured livelihood in a hostile country, and he needed to escape from the psychic anxiety of his revolting instincts. In time, he satisfied both needs in the one way—the way of prosperity. His material success not only made him secure in his merely physical existence; his success was to him the evidence of God's favor, too; it supported him against his inner apprehensions; and it satisfied that deepest need of life, the need of self-maximation, which is the need that underlies the conscious craving for liberty—that is to say, for freedom from the oppressive fear of God and man. The Puritan woman was faced by the same necessities of making a living and of saving her soul. But she could not use the man's way—the way of prosperity through independent industry. She could only succeed in life by co-operating with him and obtaining sustenance from his success. The one form of co-operation permitted to her was co-operation through marriage. The failure of the husband meant the failure of the wife; as she co-operated, she benefited; and, just as becoming a prosperous citizen allayed the man's psychic anxiety, so becoming a good wife allayed the woman's psychic anxiety. Religious fear, with her, poured itself along this channel.

The man had to use his intellect and his imagination, more than she, in order to find ways and means of making a prosperous living. As his education broadened, and he devoted himself more and more to the problem of achieving material success, religion became fainter and fainter with him. His conscience transferred itself to commercialism; and his underlying soul-fear became a subconscious impulse that drove him toward business efficiency. The woman remained more religious because she was more protected in her development from the influences that led him away. Her



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conscience transferred itself to the business of being a successful wife, and her subconscious anxiety developed an exaggerated sense of wifely duty.

But there was this most important difference between the Puritan man's escape into prosperity and the Puritan woman's relief through wifely co-operation in prosperity: the woman failed to attain the self-maximation which the man attained. In her devotion to his interests, she could succeed only by repressing her own ego. She could lighten the load of that repression only by extending her ego to include her children. So she came to live in her husband and her children wholly, and in time she produced that dominant type of American woman, the "home-and-mother" type.

She is easily the most important person in America—the American mother. She is far more important than any man. It is chiefly she who makes the character of the nation, because it is she who sets the subconscious ideals of its citizens in their childhood before their intelligence fully develops; and once those unconscious ideals are set, it has been found impossible, in the past, for intelligent education to change them. She is a more powerful influence in her home than the foreign mother is in hers, because in America the children are left more in the mother's care; the American husbands are more absorbed in their business or their profession than the men abroad; American children are not so generally taken away from their mothers and sent to boarding school; the American school-teacher is usually a woman, and she acts as a proxy for the mother. Consequently, to the American subconscious mind, there is no symbol so potent as the mother image. On the stage, in the moving pictures, in fiction, in the popular song, she has an appeal far greater than the mother has abroad. In almost every successful Ameri-

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can man's autobiography, we find him crediting his success to his mother. On the battlefields of France, the mother image replaced all other love images. It is pathetic to find in Americans of the most distinguished achievement, the feeling that still they have not been all that mother expected of them. She is largely responsible for the degree of idealism that is so characteristic of the American mind.

The Puritan woman used her intellect devotedly in the narrowed occupation of becoming a good wife and mother. The man saw the world as he found it. He had to conquer the physical opposition of nature in a new land and he had to reckon with the facts of human nature also. He accepted human nature as made up of qualities of envy, jealousy, avarice, self-interest, and so forth; and he devised ways of expediency and opportunism to get along with these things in humanity, in order that he might prosper. The woman, being barred from a knowledge of the world as it is, formed a dream world in which she justified her ideals. In her dream world she did not have to compromise with the facts of human nature; they were vices, and they could be annihilated by an act of imagination. She was typically an idealist, as the man was largely a pragmatist.

She was forced to repress her sense of the injustice to herself that she felt in the man's terms of co-operation in marriage, so she made it up to herself by demanding abstract justice in her dream world. And she gave her picture of the world to her children and equipped them with her ideals as the weapons with which to attack reality.

She felt the opposition of reality as an obscure moral danger threatening her husband and her sons, and she saw that danger incarnated in the "bad boy" of the neighborhood who led her sons into mischief. The bad

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boy, grown up, was equally a menace to her husband, and it was to combat this menace that she became a social reformer. The men of the family accepted her ideals of reform as worthy aspirations toward making a better world; but, meantime, they had to succeed in the world as it was; and without opposing her ideal, they continued to compromise in their relations with reality. That is to say, those compromised who succeeded materially—the sons imitating the father in conduct even while they subscribed to the mother's hope. Those sons who followed the mother's teaching and example faithfully—usually because of an antagonism to the father—became idealists and reformers and split away from what you might call the "prosperity type" of American. Anthony Comstock is an extreme example. Others kept enough of the mother's attitude of mind to create that practical sort of American idealism which goes along with hard business sense without conflict.

Among her most recognizable children are those good Americans who leave politics and the hurly-burly of practical government to the realists and complain that they are exploited and despoiled. In literature they are the melancholy minor poets, or the "escape artists" of romantic fiction, or the sentimental realists who write the comedies of manners, or the psychologists of the Henry James school who study character in an exhaust chamber from which all the crude brutalities of life have been withdrawn. In painting they are the poetical landscape artists of the famous American "homœopathic" school. If they revolt in art it is either a revolt against the artistic conventions and the accepted form—a revolt in manner, not in matter—or it is a Greenwich Village revolt, so self-conscious that it impairs the balanced sincerity of their reflection of life. They cru-

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sade in defense of free verse, and then use free verse as a medium in which to imitate the conventionalized etherealities of Japanese prints. As every-day citizens they have impractical public ideals, to which their politician does only lip service, with the tongue in the cheek. They profess a private morality which they too often find it impossible to practice, and they forgive themselves their inevitable lapses in conduct so long as they do not lower their standards of pretension. Their idealism is then maintained on hypocrisy; and privately and publicly, they suffer unending defeat.

Facing the realities of business and industry with a masculine pragmatism, the typical American has been an enviable success. Confronting the facts of human nature with a feminine idealism, he has been far less triumphant. By his invention of instruments of material progress he has put the whole world in his debt; he has led mankind in the age-old struggle against the inimical environment of human life and all but conquered it; and in that aspect of his mind he has set a high example to the civilizations of Europe. It is in his conduct of human relations and the solution of the problem of his own happiness that he seems most to have failed; and his failure threatens to repeat itself in an even greater degree in his relations with foreign states and peoples, now that the issues of the war have compelled him to take part in the political life of the world.

At any rate, this theory of him, so far as it goes, is the explanation which the new psychology offers of why the typical American is so idealistic, so practical, so inventive, so unphilosophic, so unartistical, so worried, restless, anxious, and ambitious, so apparently self-confident and yet so sensitive to criticism, so successful in achieving his aims and so unhappy in their



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achievement. But such a theory, given thus sketchily, in large generalizations, is no more than the rough beginning of an explanation of the modern American mind. In order to fill out the account to any accurate aspect of truth, it is necessary to take specimens—to consider some conspicuous Americans who are concededly typical and to find, if possible, the origin of those peculiar qualities in them that are accepted as characteristically American.

## II. *In Mark Twain*

IN the eyes of the foreigner, at least, Mark Twain (Samuel L. Clemens) was as representative an American as the last century produced. As an artist, he was considered distinctively American. As a humorist, he was regarded as the amusing embodiment of many characteristic American traits. He was honored at home and abroad more conspicuously than any other American of his time, except Theodore Roosevelt. An examination of him should throw light on some of those qualities of the American mind for which he was most noted and most esteemed.

He was born a seven-month child, "a puny baby with a wavering promise of life," according to Albert Bigelow Paine's official biography; and to the new psychology, this fact is of prime importance. A premature birth makes the struggle for survival hard on the vital organs of the infant, and he begins life in timidity. He has, of course, no intelligence, no conscious mind whatever; but he has the unconscious animal mind which is to remain with him throughout his life. In this mind, physical inferiority will produce a mute recognition of inadequacy and insecurity; and if the feeling is not carefully nursed out of him by the affectionate protection and encouragement of his parents, it will continue as a basic strain of unconscious fearfulness that will plague him as long as he lives.

It has been found that such a hidden feeling of in-

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feriority is at the bottom of most of the vagaries of what we call "the artistic temperament." It is the mainspring of much intellectual achievement and the origin of a great deal of erratic genius. The ego of the child desires to dominate. If he is physically a weakling, he will try to win by other than physical means; that is to say, he will use his wits. The inferior child, timid and fearful, will become as alert as a wild animal in the woods. He will be sensitive, affectible, responsive, precocious, foxy. He will develop his intelligence, his faculties of perception, his sympathetic imagination. He may make a great success of his life, consequently. But no matter what success he achieves, his pride in himself will always be insecurely supported on the shaking foundation of an unconscious sense of inferiority. That, as we shall see, was true of Mark Twain.

His parents never did anything either by unconscious example or by conscious precept to save him from his early fear. His father was himself inadequate to life, a visionary, a failure, who drifted from one little backwoods town to another in search of a fortune that was to come from gigantic land projects, which never "boomed," or from some mad dream like his "perpetual-motion machine." And while he pursued these mirages, his family sank deeper into poverty year by year. He was upright, moral, respectable, and always respected. But he "seldom devoted any time to the company of his children"; "he did not join in their amusements and he rarely or never laughed." "Mark Twain did not remember ever having heard his father laugh." He was a stern man, capable of tying up a slave girl by the wrists and lashing her with a cowhide whip to punish her for insolence. He seems to have figured chiefly in the early life of his children as the

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power that enforced moral precepts by chastisement. He was not the sort of parent to cure a child of a basic timidity.

Mark Twain's mother, before her marriage, had been in love with a young physician of Lexington; there had been some "misunderstanding" between them, and in the midst of her pique she married John Clemens. "Sixty years later," Paine writes, "when John Clemens had long been dead, she took a railroad journey to a city where there was an Old Settlers' Convention, because among the names of those attending she had noticed the name of the lover of her youth. She meant to humble herself to him and ask forgiveness after all these years. She arrived too late; the convention was over and he was gone. Mark Twain once spoke of this and added: 'It is as pathetic a romance as any that has crossed the field of my personal experience in a long lifetime.' "

It is more than that. It is the key to the mother's character and to Mark Twain's relations with her. Her marriage had been a "one-sided love affair"—the love all on the husband's side of it—and though she did her duty by him and his children, she was no doting wife or mother. One of Mark Twain's brothers remembered that after the death of a younger child the parents "kissed each other, something hitherto unknown." She developed the common peculiarities of a mind that is almost morbidly expiating a hidden cruelty. She refused to kill even a fly, and she punished the cat for catching mice. She would drown the young kittens, but only after she had warmed the water. Her sense of pity was apparently abnormal, and she was regarded as a charitable, sympathetic woman. Yet she had a very biting sense of humor and delivered her sarcasms with a straight face, in an ef-



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fective drawl. Nearly all of Mark Twain's anecdotes of her in his childhood days picture her as using her humorous sarcasm on him, for his moral betterment. Above all, she was an orthodox believer in a stern Calvinistic God—not a god of loving forgiveness, but of justice and retribution—and she planted the fear of this avenging deity ineradicably in Mark Twain's young mind.

The evidences of subconscious fear in him as a child are obvious in Paine's biography. "He walked in his sleep, and often the rest of the household got up in the middle of the night to find him fretting with cold in some dark corner." In sleep, the subconscious mind—the mind that dreams—is free of the control of intelligence, and it expresses its fears in nightmares. Sleep walking is an attempt to escape from these fears. In childhood, it is the instinctive effort to find refuge with the mother; and if the mother is not the refuge that she should be, the child will wander about in its somnambulism, as Mark Twain did.

And he not only ran away, subconsciously at night. "He was a queer, fanciful, uncommunicative child that detested indoors," says Paine, "and would run away if not watched—always in the direction of the river." He even showed the characteristic death-wish of the child who is trying to compel affection. "An epidemic of measles—the black, deadly kind—was ravaging Hannibal, and he yearned for the complaint." When he heard that a playmate had it, he ran away from his home and crept into bed with the sick boy, and contracted the disease. "Some days later, the family gathered tearfully around his bed to see him die." As he said later, "this gratified him, and he was willing to die for the glory of that touching scene."

It is easy to appear to make too much of this sort of

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incident. Mrs. Clemens was far from being a cruel mother, though there was cruelty in her humor. The difficulty was that her son was an unduly sensitive child. In her old age, she once confessed to him: "You gave me more uneasiness than any child I had." He said, "I suppose you were afraid I wouldn't live." She replied, "No; afraid you would." He enjoyed the joke, but as a child he would not have enjoyed it. At the age of five he was rescued from the river and brought home half drowned. When she had restored him "with mullein tea and castor oil, she said: 'I guess there wasn't much danger. People born to be hanged are safe in the water.'" When he was whipped, his first day at school, and he came home to her for sympathy, she said "she was glad there was somebody at last who could take him in hand." He was jealous of his brother Henry, "a much handsomer lad and regarded as far more promising." Paine records that "sometimes he charged his mother with partiality" for Henry. "He would say: 'Yes, no matter what it is, I am always the one to get punished'; and his mother would answer: 'Well, if you didn't deserve it for that, you did for something else.'" The way in which these retorts stuck in Mark Twain's memory shows how barbed they were to his child mind.

Any child is born into an adult world in which he soon becomes aware of his pathetic weakness. He is strong only in his parents' love and protection. His mother's frown arouses a real anxiety. He has to have her approval and to know he has it. Except in his earliest infancy, Mark Twain never won from his mother the secure affection that he craved. She was more concerned with making him good than with making him happy. He learned to "fear God and dread the Sunday school." He had fearful dreams. "He set

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them down as warnings or punishments, designed to give him a taste for a better life. He felt that it was his own conscience that made these things torture him. That was his mother's idea." He was afraid of thunder and of the dark. "In the fearsome darkness, he would say his prayers, especially when a thunder-storm was coming, and vow to lead a better life in the morning." His mind was full of weird supernatural nonsense which he got from listening to the ghost stories of the negroes. He was panicky also with the fear of hell. "Flames were being kept brisk for little boys who were heedless of sacred matters; his home teaching convinced him of that." His ambition was to be a minister. "It looked like a safe job," he once said. "It never occurred to me that a minister could be damned."

In fact, Mark Twain began life with a well-developed case of that Puritan anxiety—that soul-fear—which the new psychology finds at the bottom of most of the peculiarities of the typical American mind. Like most American boys, his training was left to his mother, and, like most American mothers, she was herself suffering from the severities of a Puritan upbringing. She did not see the boy's natural animal instincts as forces of nature that were to be slowly trained and educated and civilized and, so to speak, domesticated. She saw them as wild animal impulses that were to be exterminated. She saw them, and made him see them, as the devil in him. She set up against them, in his conscious mind, the awful fear of an avenging God, and she gave him no device by which he could placate that ever-offended Deity and obtain forgiveness. He could only escape eternal wrath by being "good." It was impossible for him, or any other child, to be always good. His repressed instincts continually rebelled. He revolted; he disobeyed; he ran away "down the

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river"; he lied; he was full of fear and hatred and disgust and repentance. Like all children, he hated the power that was punishing him, but his affection repressed the hatred. In his later years, his hatred of the biblical God of his youth was bitter and outspoken. His hatred of his mother was always repressed and unconscious, but it was so strong that it "conditioned," as the psychologists say, all the impulses of affection in him throughout his life. It gave him a chronic impishness in affection that plagued his friends, his relatives, and all whom he loved most. And any authority, any authorized convention, aroused an antagonism in him that found its vent in satiric humor. His humor, in fact, was the outcome of revolt deflected into an acceptable witty form of expression by the unconscious timidity which prevented him from making a direct attack.

The actual technique of his humor was imitated from his mother. Whom a child loves, it imitates. He imitated from her his drawl. None of her other children had it. She called it "Sammy's long talk." Her own manner of speaking "was still more deliberate, but she seemed not to notice it." And he imitated from her his characteristic irony. He had "a gentle, winning manner, and a smile that with his slow, measured way of speaking made him a favorite with his companions. He did not speak much . . . but for some reason, whenever he did speak, every playmate in hearing stopped whatever he was doing and listened. . . . Perhaps it was something droll; perhaps it was just a commonplace remark that his peculiar drawl made amusing."

His playmates became his gallery of applause. His ability to make them laugh became a device that gave him a feeling of superiority. He had another device—



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another device of the timid—a trick of compensatory lying. The weak child, unable to compete in actuality, compensates by fabricating stories of imaginary exploits. “He would say his prayers willingly enough when encouraged by his sister Pamela, but he much preferred to sit up in bed and tell astonishing tales of the day’s adventures.” When the neighbors, hearing some of these yarns, said to his mother, “You don’t believe anything that child says, I hope,” she replied: “Oh yes. I know his average. I discount him ninety per cent.”

Later, as a boy, he added a technic of story-telling learned from an old negro, named Uncle Ned, who had a dramatic gift. In story-telling his compensatory lying became the amusing exaggeration which he made almost the brand and trade mark of his humor. His assumed gravity and slow drawl heightened the effect of the ironical twist of statement that he had caught from his mother. All these devices were used at first as the instinctive means by which he could triumph over any boy who was physically or financially or otherwise his supposed superior. They became the adult means by which he always raised his ego in any company. And they were the foundations of his whole success.

American humor is what science calls a “folkway.” It is an outlet for repressed emotions in disguise. At its crudest it relieves a suppressed hatred—as, for instance, in the practical joke, which does its victim an injury but compels him to join in the laugh at his own discomfiture if he wishes to be considered “a good sport.” The joke disguises your vengeful purpose, but that purpose is the unconscious motive of your joke, and the victim shows that he recognizes your hidden motive when he responds to it with the anger and animosity which he suppresses. The American cartoon is

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this sort of cruel humor. In drama and the moving picture it takes the form of slap-stick comedy. The cruelty of the popular moving-picture humor is almost savage. And in the dressing tent at the circus you will hear the battered clown complain, "If I was to fall down and break my neck, these rubes would laugh themselves to death." They seem almost to hate him, and their laughter at his mishaps sounds cruel, because in that laughter they are draining off suppressed hatreds which the civilized conventions of morality have reservoired. The greater the repressions, the louder the laughter. Humor is a conspicuous quality of American life because in that life repressions are so general. Mark Twain tapped a well of hatred and revolt in the subconscious minds of his generation, and it paid him like an oil gusher.

In his *Huckleberry Finn*, begun at forty-one, he allowed his repressed emotion of filial impiety to escape unconsciously against Huck's father; and in *Tom Sawyer*, the same emotion expressed itself against Aunt Polly, who acted as a substitute for Mark Twain's mother. Because of this impiety the books were withheld from the children's shelves by some severe public librarians of the day; but the impiety found its echo in the popular heart. The typical American retains in his subconscious mind a dynamic, repressed, and undrained emotion of filial revolt, caused by his hatred of the Calvinistic Puritanism of his parents. By identifying himself with Huck or Tom, he is able to drain off this emotion innocently. The heartiness of his guffaw depends upon the energy of his long-buried anger.

*Innocents Abroad* gave the same sort of vent to a suppressed revolt against the Puritan God. Before the book was issued, a report got out that "it was to be irreverent, even blasphemous, in tone," and the head of

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the publishing house only forced it into print, against the fears of his directors, by threatening "to resign the management and publish the book himself." Says Paine: "It was the most daring book of the day. Passages were calculated to take the breath of the orthodox reader; only, somehow, it made him smile, too." It had a record-breaking circulation. It was found in homes whose "occupants had just two books: the Bible and *The Innocents Abroad*—the former in good repair." The juxtaposition of the two volumes was not without significance: it was the unconscious recognition of the unconscious value of Mark Twain's volume to the American mind.

He was Robert G. Ingersoll disguised as a humorist, and his unconscious timidity put that disguise on him and prevented him from being such a satirist as Dean Swift. His sense of inferiority made him conceal his satire in buffoonery—that is to say, when he wished to satirize his reader, he satirized himself, and the reader laughed at his own absurdities put forward as Mark Twain's. It is this sense of inferiority which makes his humor seem "kindly." The laughter is playing a sort of practical joke on himself and enjoying his own discomfort. By laughing at his shortcomings, he feels superior to them and escapes his own condemnation of them. Here is the quality in American humor which Rudyard Kipling struck at, in his lines about the American's "cynic devil in his blood . . . that gilds the slough of his despond but dims the goal of his desire." The reformer attacks the slough, to drain it instead of laughing at it; and the typical American always complains of his reformers that "they have no sense of humor." If they had, of course, it is not likely that they would be reformers.

In these ways, then, Mark Twain was a typical

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American: he was full of the American's Puritan anxiety, and he drained off his repressed hatreds and revolts in humor. But he was not typical in that his anxiety did not drive him to industry, to commercial money-making, to worldly respectability and well-being. Why? Probably because, unconsciously, he imitated not only his mother, but his father. During the most poverty-stricken of his childhood days, he must have sat in a family circle that fortified itself against depression by listening to John Clemens's promises of an enormous fortune to come from his "Tennessee lands," or his perpetual-motion machine, or some other such visionary scheme of unearned profit. Those dreams must have registered in the boy's subconscious mind as acceptable means of escape from adversity. All through his life he pursued just such mirages of sudden wealth. At the height of his earning power he invested huge sums in all sorts of doubtful projects. During the year 1881, for instance, he put \$41,000 in "ventures" from which he never received a penny. "Almost any proposition that seemed to offer possible millions appealed to him." They bankrupted him. He dug his way out of the ruins by writing and lecturing, and he was no sooner out than he began investing again in similar schemes and inventions. An author once asked him to indorse a book "calculated to assist inventors and patentees," and he replied: "I have, as you say, been interested in patents and patentees. If your books tell how to exterminate inventors, send me nine editions. Send them by express." He bewailed his weakness for visionary investments. He could not understand it. It was ungovernably compulsive; and it betrayed him, all his life.

It was, in fact, a subconscious device to escape the oppressions of reality. It allowed him to run away,



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from the daily grind of earning a living, into a happier world of great wealth obtained without effort. And he not only ran away so in fancy. He ran away in the flesh, again and again. As a child, and as a boy, he ran away from his home, always to the river; and his early career, up to the time of his marriage, was regularly divided into periods of industry that ended in escapes into vagabondage.

The first period of industry lasted from the age of twelve to eighteen. At twelve, his father died, and he was full of remorse. "Wildness, disobedience, indifference to his father's wishes, all were remembered; a hundred things, in themselves trifling, became ghastly and heart-wringing in the knowledge that they could never be undone." His mother, "seeing his grief," took advantage of it like a true Puritan. She "led him into the room where his father lay" and over the dead body she made him "promise to be a better boy." He promised "to be a faithful and industrious man and upright, like his father."

By this means, she not only filled him with the energy of soul-fear which ordinarily drives the American boy to industrious success. She also made the dead body a symbol of guilt that ever after aroused in Mark Twain a horrible emotion of despairing fear and unreasonable remorse. In his letters and his diaries, the later deaths of his brother Henry, of his son Langdon, of his daughter Susy, are followed by the wildest accusations that he had practically killed them. His feeling of guilt, welling up ungovernably from his subconscious mind, had to be explained by his conscious intelligence; he explained it by twisting the meaning of all sorts of innocent incidents into elaborate bills of particulars against himself. This is the natural consequence of making a child see death and disease as the punishments

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or the warnings of Providence. In Mark Twain's advanced old age, when his whole generation was dying, it helped to reduce him to a heart-breaking pessimism and despair.

After his father's death, energized by his promise to his mother, he went to work to help support the family. He was apprenticed to a printer for board and clothes—"more board than clothes, and not much of either." He was clever and industrious, and he progressed rapidly from the position of printer's devil to a sort of sub-editorship of the weekly newspaper; but he was not paid. At the end of his term of apprenticeship, his brother Orion bought a local journal, and Mark Twain went to work for him. The paper was a failure. Orion could not pay in wages, and he did not pay in praise. Mark Twain was unhappy and discouraged. His industry was receiving no reward. He declared that his brother hated him. He announced that he was going to St. Louis. Secretly he intended to go much farther. He had met a tramp printer in the newspaper office, and he longed to get away into a tramp-printer's life of self-supporting irresponsibility. Having sworn on the Bible, to his mother, that he would not "throw a card or drink a drop of liquor," he escaped. "And so," his brother afterward wrote, "he went wandering in search of that comfort and that advancement and those rewards of industry which he had failed to find where I was—gloomy, taciturn, and selfish." It was the turning point of Mark Twain's career. At eighteen, full of the typical American's Puritan anxiety, he had failed to find in industry the Puritan's outlet for his repressed energies and in prosperity the Puritan's surcease for his inner apprehensions.

He made his way from St. Louis to New York, from New York to Philadelphia and to Washington, and

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then back home for a visit. He settled down to work for a time in St. Louis and in Keokuk. But the first of his dreams of sudden wealth possessed him—from reading a book on South American travel—and he decided to go to the Amazon and make a fortune collecting coca. While he was trying to save enough money for this adventure, he found a fifty-dollar bill on the street and started out. He got as far as Cincinnati, spent the winter there working as a printer, and set forth again in the Spring to go to the Amazon by way of New Orleans. On this trip down the Mississippi River, an old ambition welled up in him. He decided to become a pilot. It was a new “escape.” It was a sort of “running away to the river” again, as he had so often run in his youth.

As a river pilot Mark Twain was successful and most happy. Here was a position that called for all the dexterities of mind which his unconscious fear and sense of inferiority had perfected in him. He was required to be always watchful, apprehensive, foreseeing dangers in imagination, observing every possible indication of them, and taking care to avoid them. He was repaid with a position of conspicuous authority which flattered him to the soul. He escaped the grind of treadmill labor, drew large wages, had plenty of indolent leisure, and enjoyed the social successes of an almost public life. He would probably have remained a pilot to the end of his days if the Civil War had not closed the Mississippi.

The Civil War was a horrible reality which he was not prepared to face. River pilots were in urgent demand on both sides, but he hid from the call. He was “not very anxious to get up into a glass perch and be shot at by either side,” he said. When he did volunteer with a company of boys from his home town, it was for

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land service, half-heartedly, and on the Southern side. His mother's preference probably decided his choice of allegiance; but he did not serve long. Having sprained his ankle in a very amateur campaign of bushwhacking, he "voluntarily retired." His brother Orion had received a Federal appointment as secretary to the governor of Nevada, and Mark Twain abandoned the Southern cause and ran away with his brother to dig gold in Nevada. It was a new "escape" and another mirage of sudden wealth.

He failed to find his gold, but he found his profession. At various times as a printer and a pilot he had written newspaper skits of a humorous sort. Now, having exhausted his savings in fruitless prospecting—and lost all that he could borrow—he took work as a reporter on a Virginia City (Nevada) paper for which he had written some letters under the pen name of "Josh." His success as a newspaper humorist was immediate. He perpetrated a number of newspaper hoaxes—practical jokes—that became famous. He took the pen name of "Mark Twain." And this act was characteristic of him. The name had been used originally by a Captain Sellers, an old river pilot who wrote letters to a New Orleans newspaper. Mark Twain, as a young pilot, had written a burlesque imitation of the Sellers letters. It was published, and, as Paine says, "it broke Captain Sellers's literary heart. He never contributed another paragraph." Mark Twain was bitterly remorseful; and it was as an act of expiation that, after the old man's death, he adopted his victim's *nom-de-plume*.

He suffered in the same way for some of the hoaxes that he printed in Virginia City, but on the whole he lived the apparently care-free life of a Bohemian newspaperman, persecuted by such reflections as these from



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a letter to his mother: "No paper in the United States can afford to pay me what my place on the *Enterprise* is worth. If I were not naturally a lazy, idle, good-for-nothing vagabond, I could make it pay me \$20,000 a year. But I don't suppose I shall ever be any account. I lead an easy life, though, and I don't care a cent whether school keeps or not." She complained that a photograph which he had sent her made him look old. Paine comments: "He was barely twenty-eight. From the picture he might have been a man of forty." That discrepancy is probably the measure of the difference between his conscious devil-may-care gayety and his subconscious unhappiness.

He went from Virginia City, with a reputation, to San Francisco, to work as a reporter, but the daily grind was uncongenial and he became a free-lance, doing literary sketches and correspondence for outside newspapers. When this palled on him, he got a commission to the Sandwich Islands and escaped. There he wrote some newspaper letters that added to his reputation, but he returned to 'Frisco more reluctant than ever to settle down to the routine of literary work. He was "so blue that one morning he put a loaded pistol to his head, but found he lacked courage to pull the trigger." He began to regard himself as a despairing failure. He was persecuted by baseless depressions which he expressed in self-depreciation and remorse in his letters home. He planned to make another escape in a trip around the world, but he lacked the money. His success on the lecture platform in San Francisco saved him financially, but he always hated lecturing, and that hatred (like his contempt for his own humor) was probably due to the fact that the laughter and the audience duplicated the scenes of his early successes among the boys with whom he used to run away from home

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in his childhood days, and disobey his mother, and be "a bad boy." This may seem a fantastic explanation, but Mark Twain's mind was full of just such fantastic reactions—as all our minds are.

He wandered about, in a new sort of vagabondage, giving humorous lectures in San Francisco and Nevada and New York and St. Louis and some of the towns of his boyhood. He was applauded and well paid, and he was growing in success and reputation. Yet he writes home: "I am wild with impatience to move—move—*move!* . . . I have a conscience that tears me like a wild beast. I wish I never had to stop anywhere a month. I do more mean things the moment I get a chance to fold my hands and sit down than I ever get forgiveness for." He saw an advertisement for that excursion to the Holy Land which he was to make famous in his *Innocents Abroad*, and he booked his passage as a newspaper correspondent. In his farewell letter to his mother, he writes: "I am so worthless that it seems to me I never do anything or accomplish anything that lingers in my mind as a pleasant memory. My mind is stored full of unworthy conduct toward Orion and toward you all, and an accusing conscience gives me peace only in excitement and a restless moving from place to place. . . . You observe that under a cheerful extérior I have got a spirit that is angry with me and gives me freely of its contempt. . . . Welcome the wind that wafts a weary soul to the sunny lands of the Mediterranean."

In short, Mark Twain was now, and to the end of his days, hopelessly unhappy in his inner life, no matter what his exterior circumstances of success and cheerfulness. It is impossible to read Paine's three volumes of biography without realizing that at the bottom of the humorist's misery was a never-ending quarrel with

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God, his mother's God, against whom he revolted consciously, yet subconsciously feared and tried in vain to placate. It is astounding to see in his notebooks and his diaries how his mind was continually occupied with this subject. At twenty-two, he had adopted from a fellow printer a philosophy of conscious atheism and misanthropy. "Life had been developed in the course of ages from a few microscopic seed germs . . . and development on an ascending scale had finally produced man. . . . The scheme had stopped there; man had retrograded; man's heart was the only bad one in the animal kingdom; man was the only animal capable of malice, vindictiveness, drunkenness—almost the only animal that could endure personal uncleanness. Man's intellect was a depraving addition to him which, in the end, placed him in a rank far below the other beasts, though it enabled him to keep them in servitude and subjection, along with many members of his own race." Mark Twain accurately accounted for this contempt which he felt for man when he wrote on the margin of a book: "What a man sees in the human race is merely himself in the deep and honest privacy of his own heart. Byron despised the race because he despised himself. I feel as Byron did and for the same reason."

At seventy-one he published anonymously his Gospel, *What Is Man?* in which he argued that "man, the irresponsible machine," is wholly "a creature of circumstance." "We cannot say that man is a creature of circumstance and then leave him free to select his circumstance, even in the minutest fractional degree. It is selected for him, with his disposition, in that first instant of created life. . . . There can be no training of ideals, 'upward and still upward,' no selfishness and no unselfishness, no atom of voluntary effort within the

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boundaries of that conclusion.” And here we have Mark Twain trying to escape his mother’s God—and his own self-contempt for his unworthiness in the eyes of that God—by making God a blind First Cause and convincing himself of his own irresponsibility for his unworthiness. The attempt, while consciously successful, had no effect on his subconscious childish mind which continued to register unworthiness, remorse, and misery. Out of these subconscious feelings there came his book *The Mysterious Stranger*, in which man is the wholly despicable creation of a diabolical deity.

If loving and forgiving parents had given him a God of love and forgiveness to look to in his childhood, he might have been saved this misery. Or he might have forgotten his persecutions of conscience in commercial industry and success, if his father had supplied his young instinct of imitation with a pattern of conduct to that end. And if he had fallen in love in his early days and married a girl unlike his mother, he might have been somewhat released by his affection. But he did not marry till he was thirty-five. He had no serious love affair earlier. He fell in love with his wife’s photograph before he met her. And it is probable, from these indications, that a “fixation” on his mother was strong enough to prevent him from giving her a rival in his young affections, and that his wife reproduced his mother in appearance sufficiently to act as the releasing symbol for his instinct of affection at first sight, even in a photograph.

Certainly she was as Puritanical as his mother, and she succeeded to his mother’s place as censor of his revolts against repression. Says Paine: “She had all the personal refinement which he lacked, and she undertook the work of polishing and purifying her life companion.” Howells praises “her wonderful tact with a



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man who was in some respects, and wished to be, the most outrageous creature that ever lived." He assures us that Mark Twain "not only accepted her rule implicitly, but he rejoiced, he gloried in it." And Twain himself says in a letter: "I would deprive myself of sugar in my coffee if she wished it, or quit wearing socks if she thought them immoral." Nevertheless, as Paine notes, he had a "boyish tendency to disturb Mrs. Clemens's exquisite sense of decorum." He was always doing things "to disturb her serenity, to incur her reproof, to shiver her a little—'shock' would be too strong a word." And in this he was a typical American husband.

The American wife commonly succeeds the American mother as the Puritan censor of the revolting male, and his revolt usually disguises itself affectionately as humor. On the vaudeville stage, the masculine joke about marriage, directed against the wife, is the most popular American "wheeze." The mother-in-law of endless jocular pin-pricks is always the wife's mother and a surrogate for the wife. The newspaper "comics" are full of unconscious revolt against "Friend Wife." And Howells in his novels depicts as national the affectionate teasing and retort which is the characteristic intercourse of American couples in the typically American happy domesticity.

Mark Twain consciously revolted in only one thing. After the first few months of family prayers and Bible readings, he refused to pretend to accept his wife's religion; and he ended, to his sorrow, by destroying her faith in it. But he never revolted openly against her conventions of respectability, and he submitted amazingly to her imposition of those conventions upon his self-expression in literature. It is incredible how narrow those conventions were and how rigorously she

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enforced them. Paine preserves a sheet of her comments upon the MS. of *Following the Equator*, with Mark Twain's replies. She notes: "Page 1002. I don't like the 'shady-principled cat that has a family in every port.'" He answers: "Then I'll modify him just a little." She writes: "Page 1020. I think some other word would be better than 'stench.' You have used that pretty often." He protests: "But can't I get it in *anywhere*? You've knocked it out every time. Out it goes again. And yet 'stench' is a noble, good word." He had written an account of how his father whipped a slave boy; he had suppressed the fact that it was a slave girl. She objects: "Page 1038. I hate to have your father depicted as lashing a slave boy." He replies: "It's out, and my father is whitewashed." She even complains: "Page 1050. Change 'breech clout.' It's a word that you love and I abominate. I would take that and 'offal' out of the language." And he writes: "You are steadily weakening the English language, Livy."

Under this sort of censorship, affectionately if humorously obeyed, no artistic impulse could get very far in depicting the realities of life, but it would be a mistake to blame such censorship wholly for Mark Twain's failure as an artist. His unconscious sense of inferiority made him seek and submit to the expurgation, and Howells supplied it almost as much as Mrs. Clemens. They represented the popular Puritan taste of the reading public; they saved Mark Twain from the public censure which he feared, and he was grateful to them for it. Moreover, this hidden sense of inferiority colored all his pictures of life. Instead of seeing the acts of men as natural phenomena, he saw them in the light of his own sufferings as a victim of life. Consciously, he wanted to tell the truth about men as he saw it:

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subconsciously, he wanted to throw it in their faces; but he felt that the recoil would destroy him; he was sensitive to the need of approval; he was doubtful of his own potency; so he compromised on humor. He attacked with seriousness chiefly what it was safe for him to attack: the injustices of the feudal system—in *The Prince and the Pauper*, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, or *Joan of Arc*—Christian Science in its infancy, Tammany Hall in an election campaign, a clergyman who refused to read the burial service for a dead actor, and so forth. But whether using humor or invective, he was always incapable of mirroring life truly as an artist because there were too many aspects of "the world, the flesh, and the devil" which his Puritanic subconsciousness recoiled from, or revolted against, or refused to allow his mirror to reflect. Consequently, even his pictures of mediæval life, which he considered his real contribution to literature, are merely "literary chromos," as Van Wyck Brooks says in his remarkable study of Mark Twain. And in this Twain was the typical American artist.

Outside of his art, he was as profound a biological failure as America has produced. The first problem that the individual meets is the fact of mere existence, with its dangers of disease and death. To Mark Twain's puny childhood, existence was more than usually harsh, and disease and death were made more than ordinarily terrifying by the teachings of his parents. Disease and death became indefensible dangers to him, and they remained so always. When they threatened his wife and children, they doubled their terrors and made a factor of misery which baffled his mature life.

The second problem that the individual meets is made up of the obstacles which he must overcome in

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his self-assertion, in the maximation of his ego, in realizing the ambitions of his individuality. He requires to obtain a certain degree of power and a certain substantializing of that power in the form of property—a certain degree of fame and the objectivizing of that fame in a public opinion based on worth—a certain degree of satisfaction of affection and a visible return in other's affection for him. Mark Twain got affection from his fellows in return for his humor, but it seemed not based on a true value. Financial necessity and public taste forced him to use what he felt was a debased art. The fame, fortune, and power that came to him from this debasement failed to maximize his ego. He was compelled to act the rôle of jester to King Public and his serious thought was either ignored or guffawed at, as a king's jester's would be.

The third problem for the individual is the identification of himself with the race, and this was Mark Twain's final failure. The maximation of self has to be curbed by an identification with wife and home and children, and then this identification with the family group must be projected into the larger identification with the race. Mark Twain succeeded only in identifying himself with his family, and the calamities of the group dragged him down. His pessimism in his lonely old age was beyond measure. Page after page of Paine's account is filled with the outpourings of his contempt for man—"man, that poor thing"—that "comical invention," that "poorest, clumsiest excuse of all the creatures that inhabit the earth." "Anybody that knows anything knows that there was not a single life ever lived that was worth living—not a single child ever begotten that the begetting of it was not a crime." He could not even see his morning's letters on the table without exclaiming: "Look at them! Look how



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trivial they are! Every envelope looks as if it contained a trivial human soul."

"Anyone can stand his own misfortunes," he said to Paine, "but when I read in the papers all about the rascalities and outrages going on, I realize what a creature the human animal is." It occurred to Paine to advise that he should not read the daily papers. "No difference," he said. "I read books printed two hundred years ago, and they hurt just the same." And finally: "I've been thinking it out—if I live two years more, I will put an end to it all. I will kill myself." Paine suggested that he might be happier in his country home. "The country home I need," he said, fiercely, "is a cemetery."

And that was the flat truth. Paine regards him as a great philosopher, but his philosophy had reduced life to terms on which it could not be lived. He was honored as an amiable humorist, but his humor was the expression of subconscious revolt and anger and hatred and self-contempt; and those emotions finally poisoned him to the point of unbearable bitterness. He was hailed as a benefactor of humanity, and he lightened many lives with laughter, but his tragedy was that he could not lighten his own.

### III. *In Abraham Lincoln*

LINCOLN, to all his biographers, was the riddle and the Sphinx. He was described as "morbidly ambitious," yet "morbidly cautious." He was "the gloomiest man I ever saw" and "the drollest man I ever saw." He "was one of the most uneven, eccentric, and heterogeneous characters." He had "no method, system, or order in his exterior affairs," but "while outside of his mind all was anarchy and confusion, inside all was symmetry and method." When J. G. Holland, in search of material for his *Life of Lincoln*, went among Lincoln's friends and neighbors in Springfield, he was told that Lincoln "was the most cunning man in America and that he had not a particle of cunning in him; that he had the strongest personal attachments, and that he had no personal attachments at all; that he was a man of indomitable will and that he was a man almost without a will; that he was a tyrant and that he was the softest-hearted, most brotherly man that ever lived; that he was remarkable for his pure-mindedness, and that he was the foulest in his jests and stories of any man in the country; that he was a boor and that he was in all essential respects a gentleman; that he was a leader of the people and that he was always led by the people; that he was cool and impassive and that he was susceptible of the strongest passions." And so forth.

His biographers explain many of these incongruities in the historic image of the Great Emancipator as due

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to imperfections in the observer—as distortions in the mirror, rather than deformities in the man. They argue that the glass was malicious; or it was too small to give a comprehensive full figure; or it toned the image to its own tint and prejudice; or it caught Lincoln when he was impishly making a face. As a matter of fact, such contradictions were of the essence of Lincoln's character, and the glass was not at fault.

Take him on September 22, 1862, when he called his cabinet together to hear his proclamation freeing the slaves. The stage was set for what is called "an historic moment," and all recognized it as historic. Two of his Cabinet ministers wrote accounts of the meeting in their diaries that night. As soon as the proclamation issued, every detail of its preparation became of public interest; and the artist who painted "The Signing of the Emancipation Proclamation" spent six months in the White House while he was making portrait studies of the scene that he was picturing, and putting down the daily notes from which he subsequently wrote his book on the "inner life of Abraham Lincoln." Altogether, it was one of the most conspicuous passages in Lincoln's career, and it is the one of which we have the fullest record. Observe how he behaved.

He opened the meeting by reading to the Cabinet not a chapter from the Bible—as Bishop Fowler and others have believed—but a comical page from *Artemus Ward: His Book*, which the humorist had sent him. He knew the importance of the moment. He was about to announce devoutly that he was determined to free the slaves because he had promised God that he would free them if the Union armies were victorious at Antietam. He was prepared to face the opposition of his Cabinet members, a majority of whom

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he knew were set against issuing the proclamation. Yet, confronting this opposition, pledged to action by a covenant with God, at one of the most solemn crises of his official life, he began by reading Ward's ridiculous account of how a visitor to his wax works attacked the figure of Judas Iscariot "and caved in Judassis hed." And this nonsense "he seemed to enjoy very much," as the Secretary of the Treasury wrote in his diary.

What is one to make of such behavior? What was humor's part in Lincoln's life? Was it merely a very human weakness, as most of his biographers seem to feel? "In the chief drawer of his Cabinet table," writes his friend, Henry C. Whitney, "all the current joke books of the time were in juxtaposition with official commissions lacking only his final signature, applications for pardons from death penalties, laws awaiting executive action, and orders which, when issued, would control the fate of a million men and the destinies of unborn generations." Was his humorous prologue to the emancipation proclamation merely such a grotesque juxtaposition of the sublime and the ridiculous? Or was he unconsciously using his humor as an instinctive device to disarm the opposition which he knew he was facing? Did he constantly use his humor to elude enmity and conquer good will? Did he have, as the basis of his humor, the same unconscious conviction of inferiority that made Mark Twain a humorist?

Having laid aside Artemus Ward, he "took a graver tone." He recalled to the Cabinet that he had discussed with them, several weeks before, an order freeing the slaves, which was not issued at that time because a majority of the meeting had objected to it. He proposed to issue it now, because he had promised



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God that if the rebel army were driven out of Maryland he would free the slaves; and the rebel army had been driven out. He said: "I do not wish your advice about the main matter, for that I have determined for myself. This I say, without intending anything but respect for any of you. . . . I know very well that many others might, in this matter as in others, do better than I can; and if I was satisfied that the public confidence was more fully possessed by any one of them than by me and knew of any constitutional way in which he could be put in my place, he should have it. I would gladly yield it to him. But though I believe that I have not so much of the confidence of the people as I had some time since, I do not know that, all things considered, any other person has more; and however this may be, there is no way in which I can have any other put where I am. I am here; I must do the best I can, and bear the responsibility of taking the course which I feel I ought to take."

The mixture of determination and humility in this statement is significant. In Lincoln's first election campaign as a candidate for the Illinois legislature in 1832, when he was twenty-three years old, he began some of his speeches, "I am humble Abraham Lincoln"—consciously taking advantage of his apparent inferiority in order to get under his opponent's guard. He used the same device, now, to disarm those members of his Cabinet who, he knew, felt themselves superior to him. It is a device that seems to be commonly recommended to the conscious mind by a subconscious feeling of inadequacy. The determination is conscious, the humility subconscious. The mixture of the two was characteristic of Lincoln.

Characteristic, too, was his delay in bringing the matter of emancipation to an issue. He had first sub-

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mitted his proclamation to his Cabinet, on July 22, 1862. Two months went by before he made his covenant with God (September 16-17, 1862) while the battle of Antietam was being fought. On September 18 the Confederates withdrew from Maryland across the Potomac. Four days later he told the Cabinet of his promise to God and his determination to fulfill it, and then he immediately issued the proclamation—to take effect January 1, 1863.

This sort of cautious deliberateness was an early trait of Lincoln's. In a text-book on Greek syntax which bears his signature, he copied out, on the fly-leaf, the admonition "Deliberate slowly, but execute promptly," which he had found in the Greek text. The advice appealed to him because he had that virtue of patient intelligence. Such patience is not to be acquired by an act of will. It is a by-product of the dialectic habit of getting set in one's conclusions before attempting to persuade others. It is a delay in the dressing chamber of the mind where the thought is intelligently prepared before it is allowed to confront criticism. And the delay is usually due to an unconscious lack of self-confidence.

The careful logic of his argument to the Cabinet is a product of the same trait. So is the form of his Gettysburg speech, which, for all its emotion, proceeds like a series of deductions in a proposition of Euclid. And when, in that speech, he said that the nation at its birth had been dedicated to "the proposition" that all men are created equal, he betrayed the origin of his logic in his deliberate study of Euclid as a training in preciseness of thought and clearness of expression. His very precision and careful lucidity are symptoms of the unconscious feeling of inferiority that speaks so emotionally in the long vowel sounds and soft

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melancholy consonants of his prediction: "The world will little note nor long remember what we say here." The contrast between the coldness of the logic and the emotionalism of its utterance is characteristic. One is of the conscious intelligence and the other of subconscious impulse.

It would seem probable, then, that many of the incongruities of Lincoln's character might be traced to a conflict between those qualities of his temperament that were controlled by conscious intelligence and those that were more directly inspired by a subconscious feeling. But to chart them clearly it would be necessary to find their beginnings in the instinctive mind of his childhood; and there we are blocked by the fact that Lincoln was determinedly secretive about his early life because of its poverty and hardships, and that he did not emerge into any clear recorded notice until he was twenty-one.

We know that his mother, Nancy Hanks, was "a shouting Baptist," a sect which carried into the wilderness the Puritanism of New England tempered by the addition of religious ecstasy as a proof of salvation. William H. Herndon, Lincoln's law partner, writes of her that she had married at twenty-three, was slender, with dark-brown hair and gray eyes, and that she had "a marked expression of melancholy which fixed itself in the memory of everyone who ever saw her." According to the Hanks family she was "a good Christian woman." She died when Abraham Lincoln was nine years old. "Stoop shouldered," says Herndon, "thin breasted, sad—at times miserable—groping through the perplexities of life, without prospect of any betterment in her condition, she passed from this earth." She died saying to Abraham and his sister Sarah that she hoped they might live "as they had

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been taught by her, to love their kindred and worship God."

Lincoln told Herndon, in 1851, that "whatever might be said of his parents, and however unpromising the early surroundings of his mother may have been, she was highly intellectual by nature, had a strong memory, acute judgment, and was cool and heroic." At another time he told Herndon that his mother was the daughter of a well-bred but obscure Virginia farmer; and he "argued that from this last source came his power of analysis, his logic, his mental activity, his ambition and all the qualities that distinguished him from the other members and descendants of the Hanks family"—who were of the class called "poor whites."

We know, now, that such qualities of mind and temperament are not inherited; the physical capacity for them and the aptitude of brain may be inherited, but the mental qualities themselves are repeated in the child by the early instinct of imitation, as Mark Twain imitated his mother's irony and her humorous drawl. To Lincoln his mother was obviously a model of intellectual strength, and he began to imitate her in that respect. When his father married again, the stepmother found that while Abraham Lincoln did not like to work, he liked to read, and she told Herndon, "I induced my husband to permit Abe to study." That is the first record we have of a quality in Lincoln that lifted him out of his early obscurity—an ambition that took him to books and study. He was then ten years old.

What was the motive power of this young ambition? We can only argue by analogy that it was the conscious effort to overcome a subconscious sense of inferiority; but how that sense of inferiority first arose we have no means of deciding. In his later youth it



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gained strength from a recognition of his personal uncouthness, his awkwardness, his poverty, his ignorance, and the inferiority of his family. But it must have been strong in him long before that. It may have been due, as it was in Mark Twain, to a physical inadequacy in his infancy; for his great size and strength seem to have begun in a sudden growth at the age of eleven. Or it may have come out of some cruelty of his father's—for his father, according to Dennis Hanks, would often knock him down for asking too many questions. Or he may have imitated it subconsciously from his mother, whose pitiful, sad, and patient face must have been to Lincoln the symbol of all the injustice and poverty and hardships and oppressions of life as he first suffered them. Certainly, a typical Puritan "soul-fear" was added to his early recognition of inadequacy by his mother's religious teaching, as in Mark Twain's case. And his soul-fear became the strongest subconscious determinant of his temperament.

The Lamon *Life of Lincoln*, largely inspired by Herndon, makes a shrewd guess at this motivation of Lincoln: "It is very probable that much of Lincoln's unhappiness, the melancholy that 'dripped from him as he walked,' was due to his want of religious faith. . . . To a man of his temperament predisposed as he was to depression of spirit, there could be no chance of happiness if doomed to live without hope and without God in the world. . . . Solid comfort and permanent peace could come to him only 'through a correspondence fixed with heaven.'" But Lamon wrote under the influence of Herndon's conviction that Lincoln was an infidel who concealed his infidelity because the avowal of it would have ruined his political career. And that is not true. The conclusive evidence

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against it is studied in a recent volume by William E. Barton, *The Soul of Abraham Lincoln*.

Barton's work is valuable because he "taught school and afterward preached in the mountain region of Kentucky and Tennessee amid social conditions essentially parallel to those in which Lincoln was born and amid which he spent his manhood up to the time of his going to Washington." Barton makes it clear that the faith of Lincoln's childhood was a faith as tremulously animated by the fear of damnation as that of any Plymouth youngster. The pioneer was taught that he could only be absolved from original sin and saved from eternal damnation by faith in the Scriptures and obedience to their precepts as interpreted by reason; but his terror-stricken subconscious mind added another device of escape, the phantasy of salvation, which inspired the religious ecstasies of frontier camp meetings. When the terrifying eloquence of the evangelist had produced that attack of frightened despair which was called "the conviction of sin," the mind took refuge in a fancied realization of the wish to be saved, and saw visions and felt the delights of paradise. This upwelling of the subconscious wish was accepted as a proof of salvation. For those who felt it, it lightened the load of Puritan anxiety. But those to whom it did not arrive were liable to see themselves all the more unregenerate, neglected by God, and unworthy of the coveted accession of "irresistible grace." Lincoln never experienced this escape from the conviction of sin; he was never "converted"; his young anxiety and insecurity were never relieved.

He began life as a depressed Puritan, just as Mark Twain did. The religious philosophy of his young manhood is very like Twain's. And, in both cases, the philosophy was merely the intellectual attempt to

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escape the oppressive soul-fear by destroying the symbol of it. In neither case was it successful. William James's conclusions in the matter of religion seem to be correct. Religion, in the sense that it is an instinctive fear conditioned by early teaching, is an indestructible emotion. All theologies are mental growths superimposed on this emotion, and the removal of the theological belief does not destroy the fear; it merely sets the fear adrift in the subconscious mind.

Lincoln's mother was religious. So was his step-mother. One of the first concerns of the latter, after her marriage, was to see that her husband came "to jine the Baptist church." Apparently, they always asked a family blessing at meals; for Lincoln is reported to have said to his father, at a meal which was all potatoes, "Dad, I call these mighty poor blessings." The poverty of the family was extreme. The father was a failure. He hated the routine of labor on the farm and he was unlucky in all his business ventures. He had a great liking for jokes and stories, and there he set a pattern which his son unconsciously imitated. He set also a pattern of idleness, and though he made his son work on the farm and compelled obedience, the boy's labor went unrewarded; consequently, work was never accepted by Abraham Lincoln as a device to escape insecurity. Once, at nineteen, he ran away, but his conscience forced him to return and obey his father until he came of age, legally, at twenty-one. Then he went to work for himself in a general store in New Salem, Illinois.

Here we get our first clear picture of him. He was six feet four inches in height and weighed 214 pounds. He "never drank liquor of any kind and never chewed or smoked. We never heard him swear"—and this, of

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itself, would be sufficient proof of his religiosity in his surroundings. He had a chronic fear of women. In the store, "he always disliked to wait on the ladies." His friend Ellis notes "while we boarded at the tavern there came a family consisting of an old lady, her son, and three stylish daughters . . . and during their stay I do not remember of Mr. Lincoln's ever appearing at the same table." Ellis attributed this shyness to "the consciousness of his awkward appearance and the unpretentious condition of his wearing apparel." Psychologically such shyness is always an element in the inferiority complex determined by factors which we need not consider here.

Because of his great strength "he was capable of hard work," but he was "disinclined to perform it." His employers "declared that he loved labor far less than his meals and pay." What he loved most of all was books and study. He set himself to study grammar with a school-teacher, who also taught him mathematics and the elements of surveying. He read law while sitting around the store waiting for business. He read Volney's *Ruins* and Paine's *Age of Reason*, and became something of a free-thinker. In short, he acted as a young man conscious of inferiority—with that consciousness probably overlaying a deeper religious fear—who has discarded work as a device, because of his father's example, and seized on mentality as a device, because of his mother's example and his stepmother's encouragement.

But observe that he did not seek knowledge out of curiosity, nor as a scholar, for its own sake. He sought it as an aid to his ambition, as a means to overcome his inferiority and to maximate his ego. He felt that expression was as important as learning, because by clear expression he could impress and dominate others,



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and he continually strove to put his acquired knowledge into words. He began to talk and write and "orate." When he had no other audience he harangued the trees. Once after hearing a stump speaker named Posey, he mounted a box and made a better speech than Posey had made, and Posey, astonished, encouraged him to keep at it and to study law and politics. His need for the approval of a visible audience may have helped to make him a lawyer and a politician rather than a writer. He wrote an essay that was a defense of universal salvation and he gave it to his friend, the school-teacher, to read. A misreport, fathered by Herndon, has described this essay as an attack on Christianity. It was merely an attack on the belief that an angry God sent souls to hell eternally. It argued that Christ, having died for all men, had redeemed them. Obviously, it was an attempt on Lincoln's part to find a philosophy, derived from the Bible, which should let him escape from his Puritan soul-fear.

Meanwhile, he was progressing not merely by means of his intellectual devices, but by virtue of the qualities that he had imitated from his father. His jokes and his funny stories were making him popular. He was a Puritan in his life, but his stories, of necessity, were Rabelaisian, as much to be in the mode as because they allowed an unconscious escape from sex repression. Throughout his life, along with his purely intellectual devices, he continued to use this popular appeal of humor. It was with him, as it was with Mark Twain, an unconscious and instinctive device to maximate his ego, to obtain the good will of a company, to overcome an opponent, to relieve his own repressions, and to escape from his solitary melancholy in social laughter and applause. His earliest political

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speeches were almost wholly humorous, but as he gained confidence through success he used humor less and less in his public utterances. His presidential addresses have no trace of it.

When he first appeared in New Salem, his great height and strength were another asset of his ego, though they were somewhat of a liability, too, because of his self-conscious awkwardness. He was encouraged by his employer to a contest with a local bully, whom he defeated. The man became a devoted adherent; he and his gang followed Lincoln as their elected captain in a brief Indian war, "the Blackhawk campaign"; and Lincoln subsequently used his popularity among them for political purposes. From this and similar incidents Lincoln came to have an unconscious reliance on his physical size as a support against his inner feeling of inadequacy, and it is amusing to see him unconsciously using his height, as a boy might, even in the White House, in order to encourage himself and depress an opponent. Confronted by the dignified John Sherman, he said: "So you're John Sherman? Let's see if you're as tall as I am. We'll measure." To the amazement of the company, he backed up to Sherman, as if they were in a school yard, and proved himself the taller.

Lamon has said of him, with more truth than kindness: "Mr. Lincoln was never agitated by any passion more than by his wonderful thirst for distinction. There is no instance where an important office was within his reach and he did not try to get it." While he was still a clerk in the country store, a year after his arrival in New Salem, he announced that he was a candidate for election to the Illinois legislature. The intellectual hero of that day and place was the lawyer-politician. The absence of a clergy with a fixed resi-

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dence prevented the minister from being the intellectual leader that he was in New England; and there was no wealthy "captain of industry" to emulate. Lincoln, taking the lawyer-politician as his model, began to develop dexterities of cunning, much as Roosevelt did in New York ward politics under Joe Murray. But now there showed a curious limitation in Lincoln.

The American ward politician is an instinctive politician. He registers the emotional motives of his constituents by virtue of a sympathetic imagination, as it were intuitively. Lincoln never had this gift. He was handicapped by a great self-consciousness, based upon his sense of inferiority, his physical uncouthness, and his social defects; and this self-consciousness apparently formed a barrier to a sympathetic registration of the emotional reactions of others. He depended wholly upon his intellect, forced to judge men by a logical and slow analysis of their motives. But his intellect was so well grounded in mathematics and so led toward causality and finality to gain security, that he was more often right than wrong even in his beginning; and at the height of his political career he was so long-sighted in his policy that he easily outwitted his chief opponent, Senator Douglas, and maneuvered him out of the race for the Presidency.

What showed as sympathetic emotion and soft-heartedness in Lincoln was probably a form of suppressed self-pity, by virtue of which he identified himself with the victim of misfortune. Herndon notes: "Lincoln's heart was tender, full of mercy, if in his presence some imaginative man presented the subject to him. 'Out of sight, out of mind' may truthfully be said of Lincoln. . . . He did not care for men. . . . He was a cool man—an unsocial one—an abstracted one, having the very quintessence of profound-

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est policies." This has been one of the puzzles of his character to all his biographers. He had a conscious ideal of fortitude—evidently unconsciously imitated from his "cool and heroic" and unfortunate mother. His conscious ideal denied any direct expression of the self-pity that arose from his melancholy foundation of soul-fear and inferiority and childhood misery. But whenever he was confronted with any embodiment of misfortune, his suppressed emotions were at once projected upon that symbol of his own childhood plight, irresistibly. Dumb animals, stricken women, and helpless slaves were such symbols to him. "Fred A. Douglas said of him that Mr. Lincoln was the only white man with whom he ever talked for an hour who did not in some way remind him that he was a negro." Drinkwater in his Lincoln play was correct in making the President's clemency for a condemned soldier turn upon the sight of a photograph of the boy's mother. Lincoln himself described to Mary Owens how he had once passed a shoat mired in a slough and had to turn back and rescue it under an irresistible impulse. His feeling was not sympathy. Sympathy is an imaginative reflection of another's emotion, whether that emotion be sorrow or anger or envy or what not. Lincoln was insulated against such a communication of feeling, as Herndon notes. His insulation kept him from being swayed by the raging popular emotions of the years of war—and made it possible for him to work with Cabinet members and generals and politicians who, he knew, were antagonistic to him—and set the one emotion of his public utterance as an emotion of pity. It is this insulation against surrounding emotions that makes him such a singular figure in American political life, and so untypical.



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He was untypical also in the inflexibility of his conscience. Herndon reports: "In illustration of his religious code, I once heard him say that it was like that of an old man named Glenn, in Indiana, whom he heard speak at a religious meeting, and who said 'When I do good, I feel good; and when I do bad, I feel bad; and that's my religion.'" Such conscience is an emotion arising in the subconscious mind and tracing back to childhood teaching. With Lincoln, it was probably the echo of his mother's voice. It was her voice undoubtedly that had kept him working for his father, on an isolated backwoods farm, until he was twenty-one, in spite of his ambition and his distaste for physical labor and his eagerness for education and his lack of filial respect for a man who had none of the qualities that he could love or admire. In New Salem, his honesty and uprightness soon made him noticeable. He failed in partnership as a storekeeper, assumed liability for all the debts of the firm, and was fifteen years paying them off. After this failure, a political opponent offered him a position as deputy surveyor of the county, and he replied: "If I can be perfectly free in my political action, I will take the office, but if my sentiments or even expression of them is to be abridged in any way, I would not have it or any other office." He gained the reputation of being an exact and just surveyor, who never used his official information for any selfish purpose. He became, in fact, "Honest Abe," and the name was the passport to his first political success. He was elected to the Illinois legislature in the summer of 1834, three years after his arrival in New Salem.

Within three years, then, he had risen to popularity and distinction, from an extreme of poverty and self-conscious inadequacy. The very rapidity of his suc-

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cess might well have filled him with a bumptious self-confidence. But he had failed financially—that is to say, he had failed to convert success into any tangible assets of real property which could make the success convincingly real to him. And he now failed to realize his love-object.

He had been living at the tavern in New Salem, and he had fallen in love with the tavern-keeper's daughter, Anne Rutledge, the most popular girl in the village. She had been engaged to a young man named McNamar who had left Salem and apparently deserted her. His desertion left a clear field for Lincoln, and Lincoln's affections were probably the more poignantly engaged because her melancholy, due to her lover's desertion, recreated for him the piteous image of his mother. She accepted Lincoln, but she did not recover her spirits; she continued to brood over her first lover's infidelity, and in the summer of 1835 she died. A month later McNamar returned to claim her. He had been ill of a fever and unconscious for a month. There had been some incident about a letter—obscure to us—which another suitor had written to McNamar and which, after a dispute with Lincoln, had been burned unsent. Whether because of this burning of a letter, or because Lincoln's interference between McNamar and the girl was considered by Lincoln to have confirmed her in the despair of which she supposedly died, Lincoln was plunged into the depths of sorrow and remorse. He had "fits of great mental depression and wandered up and down the river and into the woods, woefully abstracted and at times in the deepest distress." He was "watched with especial vigilance during damp, stormy days, under the belief that dark and gloomy weather might produce such a depression of spirits as to induce him to take his own life." And

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two years after her death he told a fellow member of the legislature that "although he seemed to enjoy life rapturously, yet when alone he never dared to carry a pocket knife."

At the same time he was a shrewd success in the legislature. His humorous invective made him feared in debate. Along with eight other Whigs, called the "Long Nine" because of their height, he dominated the legislature and was a leader in the control of the Whig party. He supported a policy of building railroads and canals through the state on a scale of internal improvement so vast that it "dazzled the eyes of nearly everybody, but in the end rolled up a debt so enormous as to impede the otherwise marvelous progress of Illinois." The scheme was what we would now call a gigantic "pork barrel," but the conscience of the day was not against it. Lincoln supported it in good faith, and when the ill consequences developed he accepted his share of them, pleading in extenuation merely that he was "no financier." On the subject of slavery he acted as a neutral. He introduced a motion opposing a rigid anti-abolition resolution, but he adroitly put into his motion the argument that "slavery is founded on both injustice and bad policy, but the promulgation of abolition doctrine tends rather to increase than abate the evils." Indeed, as long as the so-called Missouri Compromise limited the spread of slavery, he was willing to leave the problem for the slave states to solve.

As a young politician, he appealed to the self-interests of the citizens in order to gain power, but he never seems to have viewed power as a device to gain money. He got nothing from the orgy of internal improvement. It was a plundering of the state, but not to his advantage. At the end of his first term in the legisla-

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ture he obtained a license to practice law, and in the early spring of 1837 he left New Salem on horseback and rode to the capital at Springfield with everything he owned in his saddlebags, to begin practice as a lawyer. In Springfield, he shared a room with a young merchant named Speed. Furniture was needed to the amount of seventeen dollars. Lincoln said to Speed: "It is probably cheap enough; but I want to say that, cheap as it is, I have not the money to pay. But if you will credit me until Christmas and my experiment here as a lawyer is a success, I will pay you then. If I fail in that, I will probably never pay you at all." And Speed says: "The tone of his voice was so melancholy that I felt then, as I think now, that I never saw so gloomy and melancholy a face in my life."

Lincoln's conscience prevented him from making a financial success of politics. It also prevented him from making a financial success of law. He could not defend a man whom he knew to be guilty. He could not press an unjust claim. In both professions he accumulated popularity, good will, reputation, and power, but he never converted his success into property, the visible sign of success. Consequently he had no tangible evidences of past achievement to buoy him up during intervals of failure and depression. His subconscious self-depreciation was like the dead weight of an airplane that had to continue at a high speed of uninterrupted progress and accomplishment in order to keep afloat. The moment he was checked, he crashed. In 1840 he stumped the state as an elector on the Harrison ticket, met Douglas, and was beaten. Says Gillespie: "He was conscious of his failure, and I never saw any man so much distressed. He begged to be permitted to try again." In Cincinnati, in 1857, associated in a law case with Edwin M. Stanton (his



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future Secretary of War), he overheard Stanton say contemptuously: "Where did that long-armed creature come from? And what can he expect to do in this case?" He was instantly thrown into bottomless depression, and when he left Cincinnati he declared that he hoped he would never see the place again.

To his financial failure was added his failure in love. He found no one who appealed to his rather pitiful instinct of affection as Anne Rutledge had. After some false starts and agonized vacillations, he became attracted to Mary Todd, apparently out of ambition, and won her from his political rival, Stephen A. Douglas. She fell ill of indecision, but accepted Lincoln, seemingly out of ambition also. He broke the engagement and suffered horribly from remorse. "Restless, gloomy, miserable, desperate, he seemed an object of pity." He was watched closely for days, and all "knives and razors were removed from his reach." He said: "I am the most miserable man living. If what I feel were equally distributed to the whole human family, there would not be one cheerful face on earth. I must die or do better." . . . "The never-absent idea that there is one still unhappy whom I have contributed to make so—that kills my soul." She was willing to condone the injury. "Men and women and the whole world were slippery and uncertain," she said. His conscience held him to the engagement. The wedding day was set, and while he was dressing for the ceremony a child asked him where he was going. He replied, "To hell, I suppose." He came to the altar, Herndon writes, "as pale and trembling as if being driven to slaughter." It was not a love match for either of them, apparently. And it did not help him escape the subconscious unhappiness that was afflicting him.

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He devoted himself to politics and played the game with great shrewdness, but his conscience was opposed to the Mexican War, and he introduced resolutions in Congress against it. Political defeat resulted. He devoted himself to the law and to the improvement of his literary education. He was now a middle-aged and rather broken man who regarded himself as a failure. When his sense of unworthiness, fear of competition, and lack of persistence prevented him from obtaining a position in Washington as Commissioner of the General Land Office, he wrote, "There is nothing about me to authorize me to think of a first-class office." He told his partner Herndon that his course in Congress had killed him politically. The profession of law, as he afterward said to Scripps, "had superseded the thought of politics in his mind when the repeal of the Missouri Compromise aroused him as he had never been before."

Here was the sudden turning point of his life. He had always believed that slavery was wrong; but, as long as its spread was prevented, he was willing to wait for the growth of public conscience to exterminate it. "I confess I hate to see the poor creatures hunted down and caught and carried back to stripes and unrequited toil; but I bite my lips and keep quiet" (August 24, 1855). That is to say, his emotion of pity for the slave could be checked by considerations of expediency. Of all moral issues, he once said to Herndon: "Such questions must first find lodgment with the most enlightened souls who stamp them with their approval. In God's own time they will be organized into law and thus woven into the fabric of our institutions." He was satisfied to wait until the feeling against slavery could be so organized.

But by the repeal of the Missouri Compromise and

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the events that followed he was convinced that the institution of slavery was to be spread into the North, and he saw this as a subversion of the basic principle of the Republic, that all men are created equal. The South, as he decided, was determined either to make slavery the law of the land or to secede from the Union. The free institutions of his country were threatened by the one course, and its unity and strength by the other. That was the situation as it presented itself to his conscious intelligence.

Beneath all this were the emotions of his subconscious mind which inspired his intelligence to action. It is not easy to express those emotions in intelligent words without appearing fantastic. It was Lincoln's unconscious defense of his own oppressed self that was projected into his defense of racial liberty. Considering him as a conscious intelligence, it was true of him, as he himself wrote of Henry Clay, that his "predominant sentiment, from first to last, was a deep devotion to the cause of human liberty—a strong sympathy with the oppressed everywhere and an ardent wish for their elevation. With him this was a primary and all-controlling passion. He loved his country partly because it was his country and mostly because it was a free country; and he burned with a zeal for its advancement, prosperity, and glory, because he saw in such the advancement, prosperity, and glory of human liberty, human right, and human nature. He desired the prosperity of his countrymen, but chiefly to show to the world that free men could be prosperous." But if we express this passage in terms of Lincoln's subconscious emotions, it would read: "his predominant sentiment, from first to last, was a deep devotion to the cause of his own liberty—a sympathy with his oppressed ego and an ardent wish for

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its elevation. He loved his country because it was a free country, and he burned with a zeal for its advancement, prosperity, and glory because he saw in such the advancement, prosperity, and glory of his own liberty, his own right, and his own nature. He desired the prosperity of his countrymen to show to the world that he, as a free man, could be prosperous."

Added to this impulse of his ego instincts, there was undoubtedly another subconscious driving emotion in Lincoln. As with so many patriots, his mother country was, to his instinctive mind, his mother herself. It is perhaps for this reason that the personification of a country is always a mother image in patriotic drawings—Columbia, Britannia, la France—though the governments of those same countries are father images, Uncle Sam, John Bull, Johnny Crapaud. Lincoln projected upon his endangered and unhappy country all the emotions that he had felt for his oppressed and melancholy mother and for that later embodiment of his mother image, Anne Rutledge. The repeal of the Missouri Compromise, therefore, aroused in him every dynamic emotion of his psyche, tore him loose from his static life of conservative adjustments, and threw him into the political conflict with every energy of mind and soul released.

What made him so irresistible in the crisis was this: his enormous emotional energy was coolly directed by those cunning dexterities of intelligence which he had perfected through long years of victorious attack upon the realities of politics and the law. He applied his almost unlimited psychic resources in a careful, acutely concentrated, and consciously directed thrust upon a single objective, the defense of his country and the preservation of its liberties. He had a degree of genius that differed from Napoleon's only in its use:



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Napoleon's energy served the inner ego only; Lincoln served that ego torn from his inner psyche and transferred to the bosom of his country. He served it with a cunning that was hidden, by his subconscious humility, in a disguise of rough simplicity, so that his opponents might underrate him. He served it with a winning trick of humor that endeared him to the common man, a melancholy visage that touched all who saw him, a projected self-pity that made him a father image of mercy and care to the afflicted. But chiefly he served it with a knowledge of men and their motives, a detachment from them as the instruments of his purpose, an unbewildered insulation from their confused and confusing emotions, and an appraisal of their weaknesses that was too scientific to be cynical.

He had been engineering the human nature of the gang, the community, the jury box, the convention, and the polls. He was now called upon to engineer the human nature of a Cabinet, a Congress, rival political parties, foreign countries, and his own nation. A few quotations from his more deliberate opinions will serve to indicate his judgment of the material he had to handle.

During the American Revolution, he writes, "the jealousy, envy, and avarice incident to our nature and so common to a state of peace, prosperity, and conscious strength, were for a time in a great measure smothered and rendered inactive, while the deep-rooted principles of hate and the powerful motive of revenge, instead of being turned against each other, were directed exclusively against the British nation."

"It is not much in the nature of man to be driven to anything; still less to be driven about that which is his own business."

"Not to meet denunciation with denunciation, crimi-

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nation with recrimination, and anathema with anathema, was to expect a reversal of human nature, which is God's decree and can never be reversed."

"Few can be induced to labor exclusively for posterity, and none will do it enthusiastically. . . . Great distance in either time or space has wonderful power to lull and render quiescent the human mind."

"When the conduct of man is designed to be influenced, persuasion—kind, unassuming persuasion—should be adopted. If you would win a man to your cause, first convince him that you are his sincere friend. Therein is a drop of honey that catches his heart, which, say what you will, is the great highroad to his reason, and which, when once gained, you will find but little trouble in convincing him of the justice of your cause, if indeed that cause be a just one. On the contrary, assume to dictate to his judgment, or to command his action, or to mark him as one to be shunned or despised, and he will retreat within himself and close all the avenues to his head and his heart; and though your cause be naked truth itself, transformed to the heaviest lance, harder than steel, and sharper than steel can be made, and though you throw it with more than herculean force and precision, you shall be no more able to pierce him than to penetrate the hard shell of a tortoise with a rye straw. Such is man, and so must he be understood by those who would lead him, even to his own best interests."

These are not the platitudes of a chamber psychologist. They are the principles upon which he acted throughout the war. He did not try to rouse an unselfish enthusiasm on behalf of the slaves; he sought to rally patriotic self-interest to the defense of the Union; and he moved no faster than his public support. In his Cabinet and at the head of his armies,

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he used men who envied or despised him. He used, similarly, any emotion of the public mind—hatred, revenge, fear, self-interest—that would further his purpose. He accepted human nature as a natural phenomenon, or, as he said, as “God’s decree,” and he did not scold it or repine about it or try to run counter to it. He merely tried to understand it so as to be able to take advantage of it for his ends. And he never withdrew himself from contact with it. He maintained, in the White House, an incredible degree of informal accessibility to all sorts of people, and he talked to them and listened to them with a patient cordiality that puzzled and exasperated his official confrères.

Those who, like his partner Herndon, appreciated the slyness of his intellectual cunning, supposed that his religiosity as President was assumed for public effect. Others have argued that he had been converted from the infidelity of his early manhood just before his election to the Presidency. The truth seems to be that he began life with a desperate anxiety of soul from which he consciously escaped by arguing that God was merciful, that Christ had died to redeem mankind, and that he, himself, was included in the redemption. His subconscious anxiety continued unrelieved, however, and he next attempted to escape it by seeing God as a law of Eternal Right; by believing that if he acted rightly he would be conforming to an Eternal Law that would save him; and by trusting to the feeling of his conscience to tell him when he was acting rightly. (This was the period of his so-called infidelity.) His soul-anxiety and insecurity still persisted, and when he entered upon the crisis of his life, after the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, his sense of inadequacy made him seek, in prayer, to

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align himself more accurately with Eternal Law. With his election to the Presidency, he was driven to his knees because, as he said, he had "nowhere else to go." It was impossible for him to carry his enormous burden of responsibility without dependence on a Higher Power. He not only sought in prayer to align himself with that power of rightness, but he became alert for some sign to convince him of his correct alignment. The victory at Antietam was such a sign.

Deeper than all this was another subconscious determinant. At the death of his mother, the loss of love probably afflicted him with the common death-wish of the unhappy child. This death-wish appeared again as the fear of suicide when the death of Anne Rutledge repeated the emotions of his mother's loss, and again when his broken engagement to Mary Todd restaged McNamar's desertion of Anne Rutledge. The fear of suicide was a fear in his conscious mind fighting the subconscious death-wish. That wish continued to show itself intermittently as a conscious conviction of a tragic end awaiting him. Herndon saw it as the basis of Lincoln's melancholy. "Lincoln was a gloomy man at one moment and a joyous man the next; he was conscious that a terrible fate awaited him. He said to me, 'I cannot help but believe that I shall meet with some terrible end.' This idea seized him and made him gloomy. At times his better nature would get the mastery of him, and he would be happy till the shadow of his fate flitted over him."

With his election to the Presidency, the subconscious death-wish took a new form. He was warned by Father Chiniquy of an alleged conspiracy to assassinate him. According to Chiniquy, Lincoln admitted: "It seems to me that the Lord wants to-day, as he wanted in the days of Moses, another victim—a victim which



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He has himself chosen, anointed and prepared for the sacrifice, by raising it above the rest of His people. I cannot conceal from you that my impression is that I am the victim." In a later interview with an unnamed Illinois minister, there is an indication that at the dedication of the Gettysburg cemetery he saw himself again as a predestined sacrifice and voiced that feeling obscurely in his speech. The same feeling seems to well up in the close of his second inaugural address. And to the new psychology, it is this death-wish that inspired the dream of his own assassination, and the illusion of his double image in the mirror, which he accepted as premonitions of his approaching end. The subconscious wish had found a way to pass the censorship of his conscience by becoming ennobled as a desire for the supreme sacrifice, to die for his country.

Measured in terms of pure character, Lincoln probably represents the best product that can be evolved from the Puritan in the American environment—the best both in the individual maximization of the ego and in the conversion of individual power into social values. Personal happiness was denied him because of the defeat of his love motive. He missed the compensation which comes of the approval of a mate and he missed the protection of a close circle of intimate comrades. Spiritually, he went through life very much alone. Like all who emerge from insecurity, he was sensitive to the disapproval of the herd. The feeling of doing right is never a complete protection against herd criticism; there is always an instinctive reaction that is painful. Lincoln developed sufficient toughness to endure the pain, but he did not escape it. His death-wish, in the White House, was probably somewhat inspired, like any child's, by the desire to com-

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pel affection; for, when he dreamed of himself as assassinated, he heard the people "grieving as if their hearts would break."

He was a typical American in that his soul-fear was the driving power of his energy and ambition; but, like Mark Twain, he was untypical in not seeking in industry an escape from insecurity. Unlike Twain, who as a boy hated school and study, he sought to maximate his ego by means of intellectual achievement; and though he never turned from his attacks on reality to escape into the dreams of art, he wrote, in his Gettysburg address, the finest piece of English prose that America has produced. His genius was the creation of a subconscious sense of inferiority as Twain's was, but the maternal influence made Lincoln pity himself where Twain, because of his mother's attitude, despised himself. Both were typically American in their use of humor. Both made the same typical attempt to relieve psychic anxiety by an intelligent philosophy; and both failed. Twain was the happier of the two in the realization of a love object, but disaster overtook his happiness and he died in despair. Lincoln missed the maximation of his ego in a happy love, but he succeeded—where Twain failed—in identifying himself with the herd and losing his ego in it. Both saw mankind with the same unillusioned eyes; but where Twain despised and revolted, Lincoln accepted and forgave. And whereas Twain, suffering with a sense of his unworthiness, continually rebelled against his childhood God, Lincoln arrived at the happier self-abnegation of offering himself in his unworthiness as a scapegoat for the sins of his people, and he was exalted in his own eyes by the prospect of that fate.

## IV. *In Ralph Waldo Emerson*

EMERSON has been everywhere hailed as America's most courageous and most serene philosopher. He is known as the great advocate of self-reliance, as the calm and assured rebel of the New World who preached always: "Trust thyself. Every heart vibrates to that iron string. Whoso would be a man must be a nonconformist. Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind." He exhibited in his life, and expressed in his writings, qualities of mind and spirit that are peculiarly the ambition or the ideal of the average American who is radical and individualistic—such qualities as a contempt for popular approval, a confidence in his own convictions, an eloquent disregard for the meaner practicalities of life, a faith in high thinking and solitary self-communion. Consequently, he has been at once a hero and a flag-bearer to much æsthetic aspiration and free thought. One of his first public addresses was hailed by his contemporaries as America's "intellectual Declaration of Independence." Throughout his long life he never wholly lost his position of leadership in spiritual revolt. And, in the latest Greenwich Village rebellion of our own day, young devotees of the newest freedom still trace the beginnings of their liberation back to Emerson's "Trust thy instincts."

He was wholly American in birth and education, so that his psychology may perhaps be accepted as typical of his kind in the American environment. The

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origin of his idealism may well be the origin of most American idealism. The source and inspiration of his conscious attitude of self-reliance and independence and determined freedom were, probably enough, the source and inspiration of those gestures in the ordinary American.

He was a clear and unadulterated product of Puritanism—the son of a Puritan minister and grandson of a Puritan minister, with seven Puritan divines in the direct line of his ancestry. Born (1803) in the old parish house of the First Church of Boston, he was raised in Puritanism, educated from childhood for the ministry, and never free to the end of his life from the influence of Puritan ideals and the pressure of Puritan society. Like Mark Twain, he was a sickly and timid child; and his father and mother, like Mark Twain's parents, were bound by the stern Puritan tradition that it was their duty to make their children moral, not self-confident or happy.

His mother was undemonstrative. He tells us that one day when he and his brother William were late in returning home from a holiday, she cried: "My sons, I have been in an agony for you"; and in recalling the incident, he confesses, pathetically, "I went to bed in bliss at the interest she showed." As for his father, he was known as a genial and "tolerant clergyman," but Emerson's clearest recollection of him was one of fear—a "somewhat social gentleman, but severe to his children," he says, "who twice or thrice put me in mortal terror by forcing me into salt water, off some wharf or bathing house; and I still recall the fright with which, after some of these salt experiences, I heard his voice one day (as Adam that of the Lord God in the Garden) summoning me to a new bath, and I vainly endeavoring to hide myself."



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It is noteworthy that this recollection of fear has a peculiar quality. When he remembers himself hiding from his father's voice, he is reminded of the guilty Adam hiding from the voice of God. To the helpless infant, naturally, the parents are gods. His dependence on them sets his subconscious mind in an attitude of reliance upon a higher power—an attitude which shows as a sort of religious instinct in after years—and his relations with his parents form the unconscious patterns of thought and habit that make up his later attitudes toward authority in religion and government. Emerson's father died when he was eight, and this quoted passage from his recollections would seem to indicate that the child's animal instinct of fear, originally trained to respond to the symbol of the father as the agent of physical punishment, had as yet been imperfectly transferred to the symbol of God as the agent of divine punishment. His father, as a minister, was "the ambassador of the Highest," to use one of Emerson's later phrases. He was himself, in his very earliest days, dedicated to the ministry in proud imitation of his father. It was his life-long ambition to be eloquent, as his father had been. And his young identification of himself with his father and his identification of his father with God may have been the beginning in him of the most striking feature of his philosophy—the feeling that God dwells in the spirit of man, that "the Father is in me; I am in the Father, yet the Father is greater than I." The early death of the father would help promote such a feeling by dimming the thought of him as a physical being. Such an identification of the child with the parent, of finite with infinite, is a psychological dexterity of mind that is familiar to all who have had to do with children or psychotics. It is evident in a lesser degree among wholly normal

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persons in their relations with those to whom they look up. It is responsible for much that we call patriotism.

In any case, as the sickly and sensitive child of sternly moral parents who were undemonstrative in their affection, Emerson probably began his life with plenty of that soul-fear which is the blight of Puritan childhood. It has a poisonously depressing effect on the health and growth of the young. Under the stress of unrelieved anxiety, the endocrine secretions of the body are withheld from their vital office and weakening secretions are poured into the system to lower the vitality and reduce the strength. The process was probably a protective reaction in animals, since it checked the instinct of pugnacity in combat and allowed the inferior animal to cringe and get away. It operates eloquently in the cowed dog. It affects equally the too-pious child who lives in continual fear of divine punishment. It weakens the body's power to resist disease, and it has probably helped to make true the saying that "the good die young." A great deal of insanity, also, has evidently been due to the unendurable pressure of such inescapable dread. And that may be the explanation of the appalling amount of physical and mental breakdown among the Puritans of New England. In the Emerson family, for instance, of the five brothers, William, Ralph Waldo, Edward, Bulkeley, and Charles, Bulkeley was mentally defective from childhood, Charles died of tuberculosis as a young man, Edward went insane at the beginning of his career as a lawyer and subsequently died of tuberculosis, William suffered with "constant ill health," and Ralph Waldo, threatened with tuberculosis, struggled through all his early years with weak eyes, weak lungs, rheumatism, and low vitality.

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The ordinary Puritan, as we have said, found a release from tension and a relief from anxiety in the pursuit and attainment of material prosperity. That avenue of escape was closed to Emerson, as it was to Twain and Lincoln, but more definitely closed and forbidden. It was not seemly for ministers of the gospel to lay up treasures on earth. The Rev. Joseph Emerson "prayed every night that none of his descendants might ever be rich," as we are told by his granddaughter, Mary Moody Emerson; and she was the aunt of Ralph Waldo Emerson, and she preached the spiritual beauty of poverty to him with a personal authority that was one of the most commanding influences in his life.

On the death of Emerson's father (1811) the family was reduced to poverty. In his last illness he had written: "To my wife and children, indeed, my continuance upon earth is a matter of moment; as, in the event of my decease, God only knows how they would subsist. . . . But I am not oppressed with this solicitude. Our family, you know, have so long been in the habit of trusting Providence that none of them ever seriously thought of providing a terrestrial maintenance for themselves and household." The parish continued his salary to his widow for six months, allowed her to remain in the parish house, and voted her a small annuity to continue for seven years. She supplemented this charity by taking in boarders and doing her own housework with the help of her sons. (One of Emerson's early exercises in verse was an ode on scouring knives.) There was no thought of sending any of the boys to work. They were destined for intellectual eminence in the professions, and they had to have a college education. In obtaining it, they were brought up in dependence on charity and the help of

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their relatives; and it is curious to see how that dependence comes out in Emerson's conduct, during his later life, even while his intelligence revolts against it and his philosophy of self-reliance so eloquently repudiates it.

He was brought up wholly under feminine care, by the hard-working, undemonstrative mother and the stern and domineering aunt, Mary Moody Emerson. The latter was in middle age, a spinster, well read, a keen thinker, a rigid Puritan in her morality, but in her doctrinal beliefs something of a "religious skeptic," to use his own words for her. She was full of ambition for him and his brothers, and she spurred them on to achieve distinction. When they were short of food she told them stories of heroic endurance. She preached the moral beauty of doing without. She taught them her grandfather's ideals of simple living and high thinking, poverty and education. She insisted that they could find all the amusement and relaxation that they needed in "good improving books." Emerson once spent six cents to get a novel out of a circulating library and she so reproved him for the ungodly waste of money that he did not finish the story. There was no idle play in his young life.

James Elliot Cabot, his official biographer, says of these days: "The Summer Street region, even as I remember it twenty years later, was a boy's paradise . . . having just the right admixture of open ground, fences, and thoroughfares, with intricacies and lurking places of sheds and woodhouses, and here and there a deserted barn, with open doors and a remnant of hay long untouched. There was even a pond where a beginner might try his first skates; and the salt water was close by, with wharves where he might catch flounder and tomcod. . . . But Emerson knew none of



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these things. He never, he told me, had a sled, and would not have dared to use one, for fear of the 'Round-Pointers'—rough boys from Windmill Point and the South End. . . . His mother had cautioned him against the rude boys in the street, and he used to stand at the gate, wistful to see what the rude boys were like."

Here, perhaps, is the beginning of that withdrawal from the herd that became the corner stone of his philosophy. The average American boy, first strengthened against infantile fears by his parents' love, then has his egotism civilized out of its natural infantile barbarity by the reproofs and rewards of parental affection. He goes, later, into the competitions of the playground to be socialized by the educating of his herd instinct, and in the rough give-and-take of a boy's gang he learns the practical truth about his fellows and the pragmatic codes that govern them. Emerson was not sufficiently established in subconscious self-confidence, to begin with. His instinct of affection was left Puritanically undernourished. His timidity, preserving him from contact with "rude" boys, operated to keep his herd instinct in abeyance. And, most important of all, the feminine idealism of his aunt and his mother was never really tested against the masculine pragmatism of herd life in his formative years.

There is evidence that his aunt tried to support him against timidity by good counsel. He quotes, as one of her best-remembered maxims, "Always do what you are afraid to do." And in after years she blamed herself "for having fostered the (un-Calvinistic) good opinion of themselves in the Emerson boys in their childhood, which has unfitted them for the belief in original sin." Certainly, she filled them with family pride and a sense of Levitical superiority as foreor-

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dained "ambassadors of the Highest." Emerson's young ego was projected into this feeling of hereditary priestliness. Like his brothers, he was remarkable for "a peculiar proud carriage of the head, a hereditary trait," and this air of pride was probably a protective device also. When he first went to school, he and his brother Edward had only one overcoat between them, and they had to bear the "taunts of vulgar-minded school fellows inquiring 'Whose turn is it to wear the coat to-day?'" One of his oldest friends said of him: "I don't think he ever engaged in boys' play; not because of any physical inability, but simply because, from his earliest years, he dwelt in a higher sphere." Naturally, he antagonized his schoolmates by this mixture of timidity and superiority. "When I was thirteen years old," he says, "my uncle Ripley one day asked me, 'How is it, Ralph, that all the boys dislike you and quarrel with you?'"

In any family of boys such as the Emersons, the natural rivalries of instinctive egotism are sure to work themselves out in competitive ambitions, no matter how piously egotism may be discouraged. The first impulse of the boy is always toward attaining physical dominance, but that superiority evidently went to the elder brother, who was sturdier than Ralph. The physically inferior child usually falls back, then, on intellectual superiority; and one would expect to find that Emerson had early become an absorbed student and a model scholar. But the younger brother, Edward, the infant prodigy of the family, evidently outdid Ralph in precocity, and the future philosopher gave up scholarship as a goal before he grew out of boyhood. Hence his later contempt for mere learning, and the frequency in his essays of such reflections as "One of the benefits of a college education is to show the boy its little

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avail." He seems to have taken refuge in daydreams. He read poetry and romances; that is the significance of the incident about the novel which he procured from the circulating library. He took to rhyming and the study of literary art, which he later confused with the pursuit of his father's art of eloquence. In contrast with the grave and premature responsibility of his elder brother and the precocious application of the younger one, he showed what he afterward described as a "mixture of silliness in my intellectual frame." Many of his boyish verses were written in a manner of ponderous burlesque; that is to say, he had the usual impulse to defeat an unpleasant reality by mocking it with a superior smile. While he scoured knives, and disliked the task, he improvised:

"Melodious knife and thou, harmonious sand,  
Touched by the poet-scourer's rugged hand,  
When swift ye glide along the scouring board,  
With music's note your happy bard reward."

This, he explains in a letter to his brother, was written as a parody of "Harp of Memnon, sweetly strung, etc." But he adds, "I did not really think that the harsh melody of the knives sounded quite so sweet as the harp." His impulse to relieve a feeling of inferiority by overcoming it with a smile was the subconscious origin in him of that dry Yankee humor that came out so often, later, even in his essays.

His brothers were proud of his gift of rhyming and their applause encouraged him. His letters to his elder brother, who had gone to boarding school, are full of verses. "As I suppose you expect me to *poetice*," he says, he sends burlesque rhymes. All his life, as a minister, an essayist, a lecturer, he wrote poetry as a

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recreation; and, in any but a Puritan civilization, he would probably have been a poet solely, dedicated to imaginative verse. But, as we have said already, the effect of Puritanism on poetry, or any other art, is blighting. Art is an affair of imagination and emotion largely; its inspiration is in the subconscious mind, the dream mind, the instinctive animal mind in which the emotions arise out of instinctive impulses and are purposeful to instinctive gratifications. By repressing the instincts, Puritanism atrophied the emotions. It turned æstheticism into artistic asceticism. It left Emerson emotionally little to express but a mystical religious fervor or a high moral sentiment. It made many of his most exalted stanzas sound like an expression of dry intellectuality, as cryptic as charades. "Whatever Heaven has given me or withheld," he wrote his aunt, "my feelings or the expression of them is cold."

He came out of boyhood, then, with a set of unconscious action-patterns that it is not difficult to identify. He had no ambition to be rich and no subconscious impulse to practice the sort of industry that might earn riches. Indeed, he was rather foreordained to poverty and not actively resentful of continued dependence; he went to Harvard (1817) supported by the benefactions of an "unknown friend" and by some college bequests in aid of "poor scholars"; he was given free lodgings as the "President's freshman," and later he was "relieved of three-fourths of the cost of his board" in return for acting as a waiter in the Junior Hall. He was equally lacking in any subconscious impulse to apply himself to his studies; he did not distinguish himself in his classes, and the authorities who administered the bequests for poor scholars were disappointed in him. "To tell the truth," he had written his brother William,



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"I do not think it necessary to understand mathematics and Greek thoroughly to be a good, useful, or even great man." He continued to cheer himself with daydreams, studied the Elizabethan poets, and delighted in the garrulous egotism of Montaigne, with whom he imagined he had a peculiar kinship. He wrote practice pieces in verse and prose, entering them in the journals which he now began to keep as diaries and commonplace books; he tried his hand at a fairy tale and a historical romance, but apparently he did not go far with either; he had small emotional or æsthetic inspiration to impel him to utterance, and he wrote chiefly reflective self-examinations or essays on the moral sentiments. He still felt the subconscious desire to imitate his father, to "put on eloquence as a robe," as he expressed it; and he took a college prize in declamation; but he was timid before the herd, and obviously he had none of the orator's ambition to dominate in person and sway his fellows. "He seemed," said Doctor Lathrop, "to dwell apart, as if in a tower, from which he looked upon everything from a loophole of his own." And he himself wrote of these days, "A chamber alone, that was the best thing I found at college."

There is a curious passage in his college life that gives the measure at once of his timidity and of his tendency to accept daydreams as a substitute for reality. In his second year he was much attracted, at sight, by a younger boy named Martin Gay whom he saw in the Freshman class. "I shall endeavor to become acquainted with him," he wrote in his journal, "and wish, if possible, that I might be able to recall at a future period the singular sensation which his presence produced at this." Some months later, he was still writing: "The cold blue eye of —— has so intimately connected him with my thoughts and visions that a

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dozen times a day, and as often at night, I find myself wholly wrapt up in conjectures of his character and inclinations. We have had already two or three long profound stares at each other. Be it wise or weak or superstitious, I must know him." Yet, apparently, they did not really meet. Emerson wrote poems to Gay in his journal, drew a portrait sketch of him to illustrate one of the verses, and speculated about anecdotes that he heard of Gay; and these entries are the more remarkable because he scarcely mentions his other classmates in his diary. After a year, he wrote: "Well, I am sorry. . . . The anecdote which I accidentally heard of — shows him more like his neighbors than I should wish him to be. I shall have to throw him up, after all, as a cheat of fancy." And he was "sorry to lose" him so, "before we have ever exchanged above a dozen words."

The editors of his journals note: "There is no evidence that the elder student (Emerson) ever brought himself to risk disenchantment by active advances, and the younger boy (Gay) could not understand why he was watched and even followed afar by this strange upper classman." Toward the end of his college course, in deploring his peculiar temperament, he wrote of his imaginary friendship with Gay: "I have not the kind affections of a pigeon. Ungenerous and selfish, cautious and cold, I yet wish to be romantic; have not sufficient feeling to speak a natural, hearty welcome to a friend or stranger, and yet send abroad wishes and fancies of a friendship with a man I never knew." Some months later he confided to his journal that the "ardor" of his feeling for Gay was now "nearly extinct," and he thought it "better that our connexion should stop, and pass off, as it now will, than to have had it formed, and then broken by the late discovery of

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insurmountable barriers to friendship." And he assured himself: "From the first, I preferred to preserve the terms which kept alive so much sentiment rather than a more familiar intercourse which I feared would end in indifference." That is to say, he preferred a sort of imaginary communion with Gay to any actual friendship that might not be so ideal. Afterward, as the editors of the journals point out, Gay lived within twenty miles of Emerson for years and was well acquainted with some of Emerson's friends, but "it does not appear that Emerson really knew him. Yet he was always interested to hear of him and was grieved at his untimely death in 1850"—nearly thirty years after their college days together.

While he was at college he regarded himself as destined for the ministry, but he was reluctant to face that career. He defended the literary notes and exercises in his early journals by assuring himself that they had been written "with a view to their preservation as hints for a peculiar pursuit at a distance of years." And this "peculiar pursuit" which he does not name—and postpones in his thought to "a distance of years"—was preaching. The explanation of his reluctance seems to be that his aunt's skepticism about some of the dogmas of revealed religion was deep in his unconscious habit of thought; and though he did not voice his doubts, they influenced his actions. He tried school-teaching during his holidays and after his graduation. And he hated it. He acted as assistant in a girls' school which his brother William had set up; he was shy, timid, and blushing with his pupils; and "the young ladies," as one of his biographers says, "found means of confusion." He concluded that one would "better sow hemp, or hang with it, than sow the seeds of instruction." He saw himself as a "hopeless school-

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master, just entering upon years of trade . . . toiling through this miserable employment without even the poor satisfaction of discharging it well." All the air castles of his young daydreams vanished. He found himself "of a quiet mediocrity of talents and condition." He could not see, he wrote, "that any application of which I am capable, any efforts, any sacrifices, could at this moment restore any reasonableness to the familiar expectations of my earlier youth."

For one thing, he had dreamed of a literary career, of fame perhaps as a poet, but now his muse had become "faint and mean," as he wrote his aunt. She replied, "You are not inspired at heart, because you are the nursling of surrounding circumstances." She tried to encourage him by predicting a greater danger for him when success should drag his Muse "into *éclat*." She advised him to seek inspiration in the solitude of country life. And he tried a holiday in the woods. But he saw no "satyr or dryad," as he said. "No Greek or Roman or even English fantasy could deceive me one instant into the belief of more than met the eye." All he could get out of nature was a Puritanic emotion: "there is an excellence in nature which familiarity never blunts the sense of—a serene superiority to man and his art, in the thought of which man dwindles to pygmy proportions."

He decided, at last, to enter the Divinity School at Cambridge, in order to study for the ministry; and he celebrated the decision in a poem, "Good-by, proud world! I'm going home," written in such a tone of resentment that its readers have supposed he must have suffered some slights and exclusions from the coteries of Boston. Nothing of the sort had happened. He wrote, in his journal, an even more pained indictment of "Pride's supercilious taunt and Derision's obstreperous



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laugh," of "the whisper that poisons your name with obloquy," and of all the other afflictions and temptations that oppressed "a serious mind" in the world which he was leaving; but he subsequently marked this message as "apocryphal"; and there seems to have been no basis for either the poem or the journal entry outside of a subconscious mood for which he invented these excuses. That mood, probably, was at the source of all his previous discouragements. He had been trying to face a life with the herd, of which instinctively he was afraid. He had been compelling himself to confront the harsh necessity of earning a living in a competitive society; his letters to his college classmates show that he had depressed himself with a consideration of local politics and had come to fear that democracy might be a failure; the habits—the unconscious action-patterns—of his boyhood had made it impossible for him to accept these realities of life undaunted. On graduating from college, he had written in his journal: "I am in no haste to engage in the difficulties and tasks of the world, for whose danger and turmoil *the independence is a small reward.*" And he took refuge in the college, again, as he might have fled to a monastery.

Immediately, another set of subconscious predispositions conspired to plague him. He wrote in his journal (April, 1824): "I deliberately dedicate my time, my talents, and my hopes to the church. . . . I cannot dissemble that my abilities are below my ambition. And I find that I judged by a false criterion when I measured my powers by my ability to understand and to criticize the intellectual character of another. . . . I have, or had, a strong imagination, and consequently a keen relish for the beauties of poetry. . . . My reasoning faculty is proportionately weak; nor can I ever

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hope to write a Butler's 'Analogy' or an 'Essay' of Hume. Nor is it strange that with this confession I should choose theology. . . . For, the highest species of reasoning upon divine subjects is rather the fruit of a sort of moral imagination than of the 'Reasoning Machines,' such as Locke and Clarke and David Hume." He felt himself unfit for law or medicine, "but in Divinity I hope to thrive. I inherit from my sire or his patriotic parent a passionate love for the strains of eloquence. . . . What we ardently love we learn to imitate." But—and the doubt in this is significant—"the most prodigious genius, a seraph's eloquence, will shamefully defeat its own end if it has not first won the heart of the defender to the cause he defends."

Emerson's heart had not been won to the defense of orthodox Unitarianism; and as soon as he made his decision to defend it, his subconscious doubts became conscious and voluble—especially in his letters to his aunt, on whom he depended for every sort of advice and encouragement. "What," he asked her, "is the origin of evil? What becomes of the poor slave . . . who has never heard of virtue? Must he die in eternal darkness? . . . Who is he that can stand up" before David Hume, "and prove the existence of the universe and its Founder?" And he confesses in another letter: "I am blind, I fear, to the truth of a theology which I can't but respect for the eloquence it begets, and for the heroic life of its modern, and the heroic death of its ancient, defenders. I acknowledge it tempts the imagination with a high epic (and better than epic) magnificence, but it sounds like nonsense in the ear of understanding." His aunt reproved him for these heresies and reproached herself for her part in having produced them by her own "speculations." But the

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doubts continued, and when he drove himself to his theological studies the usual results ensued: he broke down in health and got "an affection of the eyes" that made study impossible.

He went to work on his uncle's farm for the summer, and, his eyes improving, he took up school-teaching again, and only continued his studies for the ministry in a tentative and desultory way. He proposed that he should be "approbated" to preach, "to have the privilege, though not at present the purpose of preaching, but at intervals." His health grew worse; he developed rheumatism and showed symptoms of lung trouble. He longed, weakly, for the help of his brother, returning from Europe: "It may be that a contrary destiny will be too strong on me for the help of his hand. But speed his bark, for his heart is noble and his hand is strong, and the good of others is given into his hand." He may have had some hope that he would fail in his examinations, for he said afterward that "if the authorities had examined him upon his studies, they would have refused him the license to preach"; but the examination was waived, and in October, 1826, at the age of twenty-three, he was "approbated." A month later, he was in such ill health that his uncle, Samuel Ripley, furnished money and advanced letters of credit to take him south, to Florida, for the winter.

Here the argument with himself continued, and he wrote it out in his journals and his letters. He hoped for the hour when "disputed truths in theology" should cease to "demand the whole life and genius of ministers in their elucidation." He speculated dubiously on the immortality of the soul. He began to look on Christianity as "a piece of human history." But also he discovered God in the voice of his own conscience. He

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found that in his "frigidest moments" he still believed himself immortal: "the beam of the balance trembles, to be sure, but settles always on the right side." And this subsequently proved to be the most important and significant movement of his thought. He began to find God and a feeling of security in his subconscious conviction of immortality and in that automatic operation of unconscious action-patterns which registers as conscience.

Conscience, to the new psychology, is obviously a refinement of the instinct of fear. That instinct is first made active in a child by the agent of punishment, but it is soon transferred to the tabooed action, and then, by religious teaching, to God, as the agent of divine punishment, and to the idea of the forbidden action, which is sin. So the fear of divine authority becomes a fear of the sin which can bring divine punishment, and this displaced fear operates as conscience. Once the displacement is made, the idea of the divine agent may be dropped out, or it may be transferred to an abstract concept, but the fear will continue as conscience, unaffected by the skepticism of intelligence. Fear always seeks release in a neutralizing emotion, an emotion of security. Until the tension of fear is relieved, the mind will feel distressed. The forgiveness of the father relieves the fear of punishment in the child, and the sinner is driven to find some source for the sensation of absolution, the emotion of safety. The urge to be good is a flight from being bad. The true motive is escape, although, subsequently, the pleasure of feeling safe may make the means of flight an ideal to be craved.

In offering such an explanation of conscience, of course, the subconscious psychologist is not concerned with the nature of any spiritual truths. He is like the scientist who seeks to understand by what process the



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eye perceives an object; he is not considering the object itself.

Emerson's fear of sin found no safety in Unitarianism because his education had given him a doubt of the authority of sacred tradition; but his conscience remained Puritanical, though he rejected the dogmas of Puritanism. Because of his fear of his fellows, he had acquired the unconscious habit of withdrawing from contact with reality; and now he sought an absolution of his soul-fear in the recesses of his own mind. He found that his feelings distinguished between good and evil; and, not realizing that this was an educable condition of his fear instinct, he assumed that it was a divine implantation, common to all men and a safe guide for all men. He accepted conscience as an indwelling spirit, which could be trusted as the basis of a universal philosophy.

This conviction was of slow growth in him. It got its first public expression in 1833, six years after his winter in Florida. "Man begins to hear," he said then, "a voice that fills the heavens and the earth, saying that God is within him; that *there* is the celestial host. I find this amazing revelation of my immediate relation to God a solution of all the doubts that oppressed me. I recognize the distinction of the outer and the inner self; the double consciousness that, within this erring, passionate, mortal self, sits a supreme calm immortal mind, whose powers I do not know, but it is stronger than I; it is wiser than I; it never approved me in any wrong; I seek counsel of it in my doubts; I repair to it in my dangers; I pray to it in my undertakings. It seems to me the face which the Creator uncovers to his child. It is the perception of this depth in human nature, this infinitude belonging to every man that has been born, which has given new value to

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the habits of reflection and solitude. In this doctrine . . . is the key by which the words that fell from Christ upon the character of God can alone be well and truly explained. 'The Father is in me: I am in the Father, yet the Father is greater than I.' "

His winter in the South (1826-27) did not bring him to any such finality, however, and he returned home still engaged in his controversy with himself. On his way north he was offered opportunities to preach in various cities, and he accepted them; but, as he wrote his brother, "my lungs in their spiteful lobes sing sexton and sorrow whenever I ask them to shout a sermon for me"—whereas, as he says in another letter, "after a merry or only a gossiping hour, I have lost all sense of the mouse in my chest." From evidence of this sort, it seems probable that his "lung trouble" was partly a physical registration of his subconscious revolt; it began to cure itself as soon as he gave up the profession of divinity.

He wished to take that step, upon his return home, on the score of ill health, but "how," he asked, "to get my bread? Shall I commence author? Of prose or verse? Alack, of both the unwilling Muse!" He returned to Divinity Hall and continued to preach, but only at careful intervals, on invitation, nursing his health and declining to commit himself to any permanent engagements. While he was still marking time, in this attitude of hesitation, oppressed with doubts and in constant fear of a fatal turn to his illness, his brother Edward went insane and he had to face the dread of that "constitutional calamity of my family," as he called it. He had to face, too, the conviction that his brother's breakdown had come from the energy and anxiety of his ambitious effort to succeed in the world—the world against which he himself would have to

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struggle if he left the ministry. And then a new factor came into his problem—he fell in love, wished to marry, and had no way to support a wife except by preaching.

He was twenty-four years old, and he had just written in his journal, “to the best of my belief, I have never been in love.” His indifference to women had begun to trouble him. “With all the chivalry that is in my soul, backed by all the Muses, I pass in cold selfishness from Maine to Florida, and tremble lest I be destined for a monk.” The girl who overcame his indifference was a child of seventeen, “very beautiful by universal consent,” as he wrote to his brother, but with an ethereal charm that came from the symptoms of tuberculosis. Within a month of their engagement she had a hemorrhage of the lungs. He accepted a call to the Old North Church of Boston, was ordained in March, 1829, and married in the following September.

He was now apparently successful and happy. His brothers were doing well. Edward had “recovered his reason” and gone to Porto Rico to live. He was himself much improved in health. But he looked on these “flatteries of fortune” with an apprehensive eye. To his other fears was now added a fear of success. “I straightway say, Can this hold? Will God make me a brilliant exception to the common order of his dealings, which equalizes destinies? There’s an apprehension of reverse always arising from success. . . . I cannot find in the world, without or within, any bulwark against this fear, like this: a frank acknowledgment of unbounded dependence.” Out of his unbounded dependence on God—on God who was a spirit dwelling within him—he built up the courage necessary to endure his wife’s slow decline and her death after only eighteen months of marriage.

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She was the daughter of a well-to-do Boston merchant, and Emerson inherited her share of her father's estate. It was sufficient, with what he might earn outside of the ministry, to make him independent of the necessity of preaching. During her life, he had filled his pulpit acceptably to the orthodox prejudices of his congregation, and for a year after her death he continued to preach and officiate with no great success, but without any sign of unconventionality. In his journals, however, he was following out his earlier thought to its logical conclusion that if God revealed Himself daily in the conscience and soul of man, all the ancient forms of religion were a superseded revelation, and the profession of the ministry was, as he wrote, "antiquated," because "in an altered age we worship in the dead forms of our forefathers." In June, 1832, he proposed to his church that communion should not be celebrated as a sacrament, that the use of the elements should be discontinued and the rite preserved as a mere commemoration of the Last Supper. The congregation refused, and in September he cheerfully resigned. He was ill again. He had been advised by his doctor to take a sea voyage. He sailed for Europe, to land at Sicily, and he was better before he arrived. "I must thank the sea and rough weather," he wrote, "for a truckman's health and stomach."

His character was now complete, and he had discovered the psychological device by means of which he was to achieve all his success and his happiness. In his subconscious mind he had found relief from his doubts and his fears; and encouraged by the consequent feeling of peace and security, he continued to rely upon it more and more.

It is interesting to watch this retirement going on, even during his travels abroad. At first, he was wor-



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ried by his ignorance of the scenes he faced; it would have been "a substantial satisfaction to benefit your companions with your knowledge, a pleasure denied me." Then he bethought himself, rather doubtfully: "Perhaps it is a pernicious mistake, yet rightly seen I believe it's sound philosophy, that wherever we go, whatever we do, self is the sole object we study and learn." He found himself taking himself "to sea, to Malta, to Italy," as a chemist "experiments on his new salt by trying its affinity to all the various substances he can command." Travel was therefore a sort of self-study, but not, he hastened to add, self "in the low sense," but as the "universal man, to whose colossal dimensions each particular bubble can, by its birth-right, expand." That was at Malta. By the time he reached Naples, he had decided that "an hour in Boston and an hour in Naples have about equal value for the same person." By the time he had passed through the cities of Italy and arrived in Paris, he had decided, "My own study is the best place for me." His meetings, in England, with Carlyle, Coleridge, Landor, and Wordsworth made him feel chiefly that they were "all deficient—all these four, in different degrees, but all deficient—in insight into religious truth." And on board ship, returning home, he summed up the conclusions that he had now arrived at: "A man contains all that is needful to his government within himself. He is made a law unto himself. All real good or evil that can befall him must be from himself. He only can do himself any good or any harm. Nothing can be given to him or taken from him, but always there's a compensation. There's a correspondence between the human soul and everything that exists in the world. . . . Instead of studying things without, the principles of them all may be penetrated unto within himself.

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. . . The highest revelation is that God is in every man." And that, he concluded, had been his "angel from childhood until now. . . . It has separated me from men. . . . It has tortured me for my guilt. . . . It is always the glory that shall be revealed, the 'open secret' of the universe."

This brief statement in his diary contains the seed from which he now proceeded to grow the developed philosophy of his sermons, his lectures, his essays, and his poems. The first sentences—that man is "a law unto himself," etc.—are the germ of his doctrine of self-reliance, of mild philosophic anarchism, of the need of trusting to your instincts, your intuitions, your subconscious mind. The second group of sentences begin his doctrine of compensation, by virtue of which he was able to shut his eyes to all the unbearable evils of suffering and misfortune in the world. The third statement—that there's a "correspondence between the human soul and everything that exists in the world"—he made the basis of his essays on nature and science. The rest is his doctrine of the over-soul.

He arrived home (October, 1833) with some idea of giving his message to the world from the pulpit and thereby reforming "public religious teaching." But he could only preach on invitation and the invitations were few. By January, 1834, he was convinced that "you cannot preach to people unless they will hear." He was not the man to force his gospel on unwilling listeners. "If nobody wants us in the world," he wrote to his brother, "are we not excused from action."

He was living with his mother in the country. "I think the robin and the finch the only philosophers. I listen attentively to all they say, and account the whole spectacle of the day a new speech of God to me." And, as if to find evidence that nature was such

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"a speech of God," he began to study geology, chemistry, and physics, and to prepare a series of lectures on nature which he gave in Boston. He was successful as a lecturer, and he continued to propound his philosophy to a lay public inspiringly. His famous address on "The American Scholar," delivered in August, 1837, was "our intellectual Declaration of Independence," says Oliver Wendell Holmes. It called on the scholar to trust himself, to feel himself inspired by the Divine Soul, to break with tradition, to scorn success and ease and popularity, to voice only the truth as he himself saw it. Then, a year later, he delivered a similar message to the students of the Divinity School, and a storm of angry orthodoxy broke out in reply to him. He found himself attacked by "these murmurers, these haters, these revilers," as he called them in his journal. Well, he much preferred his melons and his woods. "Society," he decided, "has no bribe for me; neither in politics, nor church, nor college, nor city. My resources are far from exhausted. If they will not hear me lecture, I shall have leisure for my book which wants me."

So, withdrawing a little further from contact with the world, he became the essayist and poet, rather than the preacher and lecturer, although the smallness of his income as a writer kept him coming back to the lecture platform. He had bought a house in Concord. "A cow does not need so much land as my eyes require between me and my neighbor." He had married a Miss Lydia Jackson of Plymouth (September, 1835) and he settled down, in a literary solitude, with his mother and his wife. He decided that "if you elect writing as your task in life, I believe you must renounce all pretensions to reading." He found it useless to read in order to acquire knowledge; "I have long

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ago discovered that I have nothing to do with other people's facts. It is enough to do if I can dispose of my own." He discovered his facts in his subconscious mind, which he called "Eternal Reason." His conscious intelligence he named "Understanding." Conscious intelligence was a poor sort of plodder; or, as he says, "Understanding toils all the time, compares, contrives, adds, argues." But the subconscious mind "never reasons, never proves; it simply perceives; it is vision." Hence, it was "the highest faculty of the soul, what we mean often by the soul itself." It now began to perceive, as truths, ideas which he himself had once recognized as false. For instance, in his first book, *Nature*, published in 1836, he said, "Beauty is the mark God sets upon virtue." But in his journal, eight years before, he had remarked upon "the ancient theory (a sweet falsehood) that Beauty is the flower of Virtue." In the meantime, the sweetness of the falsehood—his desire to believe it—had overcome his intelligence and made him perceive it as truth.

Going in this way to his subconscious mind for his facts, he wrote his philosophy, as it were, on a ouija board. "In writing my thoughts, I seek no order, or harmony, or result." "I would not degrade myself by casting about for a thought, nor by waiting for one. If the thought come, I would give it entertainment; but if it come not spontaneously, it comes not rightly at all." And the highest form of thought to him was a sort of "ecstasy." Consequently, when anyone asked for the arguments upon which he founded any detail of his philosophy, he replied, quite truthfully: "I could not possibly give you one of the 'arguments' you cruelly hint at, on which any doctrine of mine stands; for I do not know what arguments mean in reference to any expression of thought." This sort of thing disappointed



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some of his disciples. It made Henry James, Sr., very angry. "It turned out," he complained of a visit to Emerson, "that any average old dame in a horse car would have satisfied my intellectual capacity just as well as Emerson." And James observed also, with disgust, that if you talked to Emerson of any evil institution, he seemed to be "entirely ignorant of its existence"; if you found fault with things, he could not "attend" to what you said. He retired from the evil aspects of reality, automatically.

His reliance upon the divinity within him gave him a most impressive mien of high and serene confidence; he bore himself in affliction with an air of detached strength; he faced opposition in an exalted quietude. On the platform, his presence and his voice were always thrillingly effective. He preached, as Oliver Wendell Holmes said, a gospel "of intellectual and spiritual independence." And "it was a great impulse to thought, a great advance in the attitude of our thinking community, when the profoundly devout religious free-thinker took the ground of the undevout and irreligious free-thinker, and calmly asserted and peaceably established the right and duty of the individual to weigh the universe, its laws, and its legends, in his own balance, without fear of authority, or names, or institutions." The repressed New-Englanders welcomed his doctrine of subconscious freedom and hailed him as a liberating philosopher. There were, however, peculiar dangers in his "gospel of intuition," of trusting wholly to one's instincts. "The individual to whom the counsel is given," Holmes points out, "probably had dangerous as well as wholesome instincts. He has also a great deal besides the instincts to be considered. His instincts are mixed up with innumerable acquired prejudices, erroneous conclusions, deceptive experiences, par-

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tial truths, one-sided tendencies. The clearest insight will often find it hard to decide what is real instinct and whether the instinct itself is, in theological language, from God or devil."

Emerson, indeed, canonized many of his own subconscious defects and made them virtues, particularly his asocial traits. Others of his limitations inspired him to a wished-for realization of their opposites in his philosophy, as in the case of his doctrine of self-reliance, which was compensatory, as the adventure stories of the invalid Stevenson were compensatory. Emerson's chosen solitude of thought protected his ideals from the tests of the market place, and he was able to hold to the most impractical illusions stanchly. With a subconsciousness conditioned to the fear of doing wrong so rigidly that it always functioned morally, he was able to trust to his instincts without ever being betrayed by them. And he expressed his thoughts in eloquent generalizations that gave a universal appeal to what was often only a partial and limited doctrine. The Europeans, for instance, who subscribed so enthusiastically to Emerson's "Trust thy instincts," would not have been so thrilled by him if they had understood that by his "instincts" he meant also his Puritan conscience; and that fact about him is not understood by the Greenwich Village rebels of our day.

The great weakness of his character and his teaching arose from his inability to face unpleasant facts. At first, in his philosophy, he disregarded only the more trivial affairs of life as unsubstantial. "The whole concern of dinners, of tailors, of gigs, of balls, whereof men make such an account" was seen by him as "an intricate dream, the exhalation of the present state of the soul" which the "Understanding" accepts as real;

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"but the Eternal Reason, when now and then he is allowed to speak, declares" that all this huge to-do is "an accident, a smoke." Later, most of the activities of a normal life appeared as "illusions," bewildering a man like a snow-storm, while always "there are the gods still sitting around him on their thrones—they alone with him alone."

But while he preached his doctrine of independence and self-reliance, he allowed his friend Abel Adams to attend to most of his financial affairs; and when, acting on Adams's advice, he made a losing investment, he let Adams replace the money by meeting the expenses of his son at college. "He had no business faculty," his son said, "or even ordinary skill in figures; could only with the greatest difficulty be made to understand an account." His business with his publishers was transacted by a "commercial friend." When his house burned down in 1872, "a friend gave him \$5000, and other friends soon made it \$12,000"; he accepted this charity as a matter of course, and they rebuilt the house for him while he was abroad so that, when he returned, all his books, pictures and souvenirs were "in their old order, as if they had never been disturbed." His favorite motto, says his son, was "the strength of the Egyptians is to sit still," and he quoted it, smilingly, against any domestic excitement that called on him for action.

To the new psychology, he appears, in fact, as a timid, dependent, introverted recluse who retired within himself and shut out reality until he ended in amnesia and the inability to remember even the names of things. At first, this recession showed only as a difficulty in appreciating the differences in the persons about him. "The gradual fading out of personality as an element in life," says Woodberry, "is one of the

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most striking incidents in the history of his mind." And as people lost personality for him he lost the faculty of remembering their names. By 1863, at the age of sixty, it was not only the names of friends that he was forgetting; he was becoming unable to write because he could not remember the names of things. By 1870, conversation had become almost impossible with him. "He was forced to indicate common things—a fork or an umbrella—by a pantomimic representation, or by a figure of speech." His last published volume was put together for him by James Elliot Cabot, from notes made years earlier. Before his death, in 1882, he was unable to recall his own name; he seemed unaware of his own identity; and he read the volumes of his own essays on his bookshelves without recognizing them as his writings. It was as if his retreat into his subconsciousness had gone so far that his conscious intellect had become atrophied.

He was a typical American idealist in his attempt to overcome facts with moral ideals. The foreign idealist more often flees from reality into dreams of beauty that are not so much moral as æsthetic and animated by subconscious longings for instinctive gratifications which life has disappointed. Such instinctive gratifications are commonly inhibited to the Puritan American by his sense of sin; he escapes reality by reforming it to his hope. Emerson's subconscious mind was typically American because it was so firmly constructed in the fear of sin that it was roofed over and cemented down with the steel and concrete of a Puritan conscience. The American of Emerson's day, restless in his own repressions, responded with enthusiasm to Emerson's gospel of revolt, as the modern American has responded to the Freudian doctrine of the liberation of the libido; but the Freudian surgeon, unlike



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Emerson, attempts to drill his way through the sub-structure of the Puritan conscience, and he either breaks his tools and fails, or he succeeds in blasting out the foundation of the American mind and finds nothing else that will make a footing strong enough to support character. Young America, pursuing the new Freudian freedom, feels consciously at liberty to dethrone all the old conventions; but subconsciously those conventions remain determinative; and if the American disregards them in his actions, he produces a degree of subconscious anxiety that ruins happiness and impairs health. It is this tension of subconscious anxiety that is driving so many American young people, to-day, to seek refuge in alcohol and drugs.

To make over an average American to the continental model of the Freudian ideal, one would need to start impossibly with new parents, new teachers, new herd traditions, new social taboos. Evidently, the problem will only be solved by a painfully slow process of education. The young Emerson of the future, taught to domesticate his animal instincts—not to try to exterminate them—should be able to begin his life with a sufficiently free expression of his subconscious impulses to insure his health and his happiness. Able then to face the facts about himself and about the world around him, he may have some hope of finding for himself practical ideals that shall bear the test of reality and not be a mere triumph of hope over unpleasant matters of fact. Civilization, it begins to appear, has always progressed through an increasing control of the subconscious mind by the conscious intelligence, but the control has to be a wise and skillful government, and we are only just beginning to learn the terms of it. The Puritans attempted a form of repressive absolutism, and Emerson's life and character are

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a rich field for the study of how, at its most commanding, that despotism failed. America's modern young rebels are attempting an anarchism that is equally impossible; and, at their best, they are making themselves as ill and unhappy as were the Puritans whom they scorn.

## V. *In Andrew Carnegie*

ANDREW CARNEGIE was born (1835) in the little village of Dunfermline, Scotland, and the family did not migrate to America till he was thirteen years old (1848). By that time his character was formed and set, with motives, impulses, and unconscious responses of thought and conduct that were not at all those of the typical American whom we have been describing, although Carnegie seemed so typically American in his combination of philanthropic idealism and shrewd practicality. It is because of these differences in him that we wish to use him here as a psychological specimen. He strongly illuminates, by contrast, the qualities that resemble his in the typical American mind.

The Scotch Calvinists, from whom he derived, were the brothers in faith of the New England Puritans. Like the Puritans, they had discarded all the rites and ministrations by which the older religions freed men of their instinctive soul-fear. The Calvinists relied, as the Puritans relied, on an intelligent interpretation of the precepts of the Bible to save themselves from the eternal wrath of an angry God. But unlike the American Puritan, the Scotch Calvinist had no wilderness to conquer. His anxiety drove him to an industry that was famous for its fearful thrift, to an intellectual effort that made his application as a scholar hateful among the easy-going English, and to an eminence in

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the mechanical arts when the era of machine industry opened in Great Britain. This relation between the rise of Scotch Calvinism and the beginning of those intellectual activities that have made the Scotch remarkable, has been often observed. Fiske, for instance, has pointed out: "No other people in modern times, in proportion to their numbers, have achieved so much in all departments of human activity as the people of Scotland have achieved. . . . This time of magnificent intellectual fruition in Scotland was preceded by a period of Calvinistic orthodoxy quite as rigorous as that of New England. . . . There was the same austerity, the same intolerance, the same narrowness of interests."

It is arguable that the popularity of Robert Burns was due to the fact that he voiced just such a revolt against repressions in the Scotch as Mark Twain's humor relieved in the later Americans; and it is possible that Sir Walter Scott's romances were so welcome because he helped his readers to escape into fictional dreams of the freer days of chivalry. Moreover, there is cause to believe that out of the subconscious anxieties which were damned up by the Protestant Reformation came that immense intellectual renaissance which began our modern civilization, and that the industry and success of the European nations, since that day, may have been largely due to the degree in which anxiety was left unrelieved in the subconscious mind by the abandonment of all the old rites of priestly absolution.

One would expect to find, then, a typical Puritan drive of psychic fear and insecurity behind the career of Andrew Carnegie, as the son of "poor but honest" Scotch Presbyterian parents. But his parents were not orthodox. His father and his uncles had revolted against the Calvinistic faith in his infancy. He says,



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in his *Autobiography*: "I grew up treasuring within me the fact that my father had risen and left the Presbyterian Church one day when the minister preached the doctrine of infant damnation. . . . I was quite satisfied that my father knew better than the minister, who pictured not the Heavenly Father, but the cruel avenger of the Old Testament." His father, he says, "was indeed a saint and always remained devout," but his mother did not attend church. "Although always inculcating respect for all forms of religion and discouraging theological disputes, she maintained for herself a marked reserve. . . . She encouraged her boys to attend church and Sunday school; but there was no difficulty in seeing that . . . much of the Old and New Testaments had been discredited by her as unworthy of divine authorship or of acceptance as authoritative guides for the conduct of life." She followed rather "the celebrated maxim of Confucius: 'To perform the duties of this life well, not troubling about another, is the prime wisdom.' "

By her example, more, perhaps, than by the father's, Carnegie's infancy was left free of the Puritan fear of an angry God; but he was not brought up in any freedom from the fear of wrong-doing. He describes how he was put to bed as a child when the curfew bell tolled from the Dunfermline Abbey. "By that curfew bell I had been laid in my little couch to sleep the sleep of childish innocence. Father and mother, sometimes the one, sometimes the other, had told me, as they bent lovingly over me, night after night, what that bell said as it tolled. Many good words had that bell spoken to me through their translations. No wrong did I do through the day which that voice from all I knew of heaven and the great Father there did not tell me kindly about ere I sank to sleep, speaking the words

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so plainly that I knew that the power that moved it had seen all and was not angry—never angry, never—but so very, *very* sorry.” By a characteristic childish transference the pleasant abbey bell became the kindly voice of God to him—the voice of a God who was never angry, but loving and forgiving. And that conception of God remained with him as a beneficent influence upon his temperament throughout his life.

The determining impulse of his nature, however, was his love for his mother. “Perhaps some day,” he writes, “I may be able to tell the world something of this heroine, but I doubt it. I feel her to be sacred to myself and not for others to know. No one could ever really know her—I alone did that. After my father’s early death, she was all my own.” (And this statement—with its implied jealousy even of the father—is enormously significant.) He refers to her always as “this wonderful woman,” as a “saint,” as a “wise and kindly woman” who “towered among her neighbors wherever she went,” as having “the most extraordinary eye” that he ever saw in a human being, as “that heroic soul” to whom “anything low, mean, deceitful, shifty, coarse, underhand, or gossipy was foreign.” He did not marry until she had died, when he was fifty-one years old; and his whole life up to the time of her death—including his rise from the depths of poverty to great riches—was animated by his love for her and by his desire to elevate her out of hardship and obscurity into every distinction and privilege of wealth.

After they had migrated to America, and he received his first rise in wages as one of the messenger boys in a telegraph office in Pittsburgh, he confided to his brother “that father and mother should yet ride in their carriage.” And, as he pointed out, unlike the old Scotch lady who felt no triumph when riding in her carriage in

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London—because the friends of her home town could not see her—"father and mother would not only be seen in Pittsburgh, but should visit Dunfermline, their old home, in style." He celebrated the realization of this dream at the age of forty-six, when he wrote his book *An American Four-in-hand in Great Britain*. He dedicated the volume "To My Favorite Heroine, My Mother." He described how he and his mother drove together into Dunfermline, with a coach and four. And if he had been Napoleon, crowning himself and Josephine in Notre Dame, he could not have felt a more thrilling emotion at topping the summit of his hope.

"As we drove down the Pends," he writes, "I was standing on the front seat of the coach with Provost Wells, when I heard the first toll of the abbey bell, tolled in honor of my mother and myself. My knees sank under me, the tears came rushing before I knew it, and I turned round to tell the provost that I must give in. For a moment, I felt as if I were about to faint. Fortunately I saw there was no crowd before us for a little distance. I had time to regain control, and biting my lips till they actually bled, I murmured to myself, 'No matter, keep cool, you must go on'; but never can there come to my ears on earth, nor enter so deep into my soul, a sound that shall haunt and subdue me with its sweet, gracious, melting power as that did."

This amazing excess of emotion he rightly attributes to his early association of the sound of the bell with the voice of God. "And now," he says, "it sounded to welcome back the exiled mother and son under its precious care again. The world has not within its power to devise, much less to bestow upon us, such reward as that which the abbey bell gave when it tolled in our honor." It was the voice of God welcoming him

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and his mother back to Dunfermline with a benediction on his success as an American millionaire.

In addition to his devotion to his mother and his conviction of God's benevolent interest in him, there was a third subconscious determinant in his character. He was sustained by an ideal of courage that had been given him by an "Uncle Lauder," who, in his childhood in Dunfermline, had told him stories and taught him songs about the Scottish patriots, Bruce and Wallace. "There were two roads," he writes, "by which to return from my uncle's house . . . one along the eerie churchyard of the abbey among the dead, where there was no light; and the other along the lighted streets by way of the May Gate. When it became necessary for me to go home, my uncle, with a wicked pleasure, would ask which way I was going. Thinking what Wallace would do, I always replied I was going by the abbey. . . . Trying to whistle and keep up my courage, I would plod through the darkness, falling back in all emergencies upon the thought of what Wallace would do if he had met with any foe, natural or supernatural." And years later, after the family had emigrated to America and he was working as a boiler boy in a cotton factory at Allegheny City, though he was afraid of his boilers and so worried about them that he could not sleep at night, he asked himself "what Wallace would have done," and he was sure that Wallace would "never give up." He became an oil boy, soaking the bobbins in grease, the smell of which produced nausea and vomiting. "I never succeeded," he says, "in overcoming the nausea produced by the smell of the oil. Even Wallace and Bruce proved impotent here. But if I had to lose breakfast or dinner, I had all the better appetite for supper, and the allotted work was done.



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A real disciple of Wallace or Bruce could not give up; he would die first."

These, then, were the dominant strains in Carnegie's subconscious psychology—an impelling affection and ambition for his mother and a notable lack of instinctive fear. It seems like a simple psychology, but, in its implications, it is not as simple as it looks. Instead of a continual dread of doing wrong, he had the unconscious self-reliance of a character that seizes opportunities to do right. Instead of being superstitiously afraid of ill luck, he had the unconscious expectation of being lucky. His ambition, based on an affectionate and unselfish motive, was never unkindly; he did not antagonize his fellows. He had a Scotch conscientiousness and he showed a fair degree of Scotch canny and caution in his self-reliance, but his dominant trait was his fearless and enterprising optimism.

He recognized his own "optimistic nature," his "ability to shed trouble and to laugh through life, making 'all my ducks swans' as friends say I do." He believed that he had inherited this "sunny disposition" from a grandfather. He believed also that it could be cultivated, "that the mind like the body can be moved from the shade into sunshine." He advised the readers of his autobiography to "laugh away trouble if possible, and one usually can if he be anything of a philosopher, provided that self-reproach comes not from his own wrong-doing. That always remains. There is no washing out of these 'damned spots.' The judge within sits in the supreme court and can never be cheated. Hence the grand rule of life which Burns gives, 'Thine own reproach alone do fear.' This motto adopted early in life has been more to me than all the sermons I ever heard." And yet his later years give a curious proof of the inability of the conscious mind of a man as sunny

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even as Carnegie to escape a reproach that was subconscious in him and had no origin in his own wrongdoing.

His optimism, his confidence, and his self-reliance in his youth were the traits that made him successful. When he went to apply for a place as a messenger boy—having left the cotton factory—his father accompanied him to the telegraph office, but he made his father wait outside on the street while he mounted, as he says, “to the second, or operating, floor to see the great man and learn my fate. . . . I imagined that I could make a smarter showing if alone than if my good old Scotch father were present, perhaps to smile at my airs.” His showing was successful; he was taken on at once; another boy was deputed to teach him the business; and it was some time before he “found the opportunity to run down to the corner of the street” and tell his father “that it was all right and to go home and tell mother than I had got the situation.” He had served as a messenger about a year when the manager began selecting him occasionally to watch the office. He got an operator to teach him how to use a telegraph key and he practiced while the office was empty. An important message arrived when no one was there to take it. He not only dared to take it, but to write it out and deliver it without having it verified by a more experienced telegrapher. He became an operator himself when he was seventeen, and at eighteen he was clerk and operator to the divisional superintendent of the Pennsylvania Railroad at Pittsburgh. One morning, during the chief’s absence, a wreck on the road tied up traffic, and he dared to assume the responsibility of giving train orders over the superintendent’s signature without any authority. “‘Death or Westminster Abbey.’” he says, “flashed across my mind. I knew it was dismissal,

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disgrace, perhaps criminal punishment for me if I erred." He did not err; and as a result of his success "from that date it was very seldom that the superintendent gave a train order." At the age of twenty-four, he was asked if he thought he could manage the Pittsburgh Division of the railroad. "My model, then," he says, "was Lord John Russell, of whom it was said he would take command of the Channel Fleet to-morrow. So would Wallace or Bruce." He replied that he thought he could manage the division and he was given the position of superintendent.

The measure of his subconscious optimism is indicated in an anecdote which he relates of his days as a superintendent's clerk. He had been sent down the line to get the monthly pay-rolls and checks for the division. They made too large a package to go into his pocket, so he tucked them under his waistcoat. "I was a very enthusiastic railroader at the time," he says, "and preferred riding upon the engine. It was a very rough ride, indeed, and at one place, uneasily feeling for the pay-roll package, I was horrified to find that the jolting of the train had shaken it out. I had lost it! There was no use in disguising the fact that such a failure would ruin me. To have been sent for the pay-rolls and checks and to lose the package, which I should have 'grasped as my honor,' was a dreadful showing. I called the engineer and told him it must have been shaken out within the last few miles. Would he reverse his engine and run back for it? Kind soul, he did so. I watched the line, and on the very banks of a large stream, within a few feet of the water, I saw that package lying. I could scarcely believe my eyes. I ran down and grasped it. It was all right. . . . I could go straight to the very spot to-day, and as often as I passed over that line afterward I never failed to see

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that light-brown package lying upon the bank." Did he see it with a recollection of his ill luck in having lost it? Did it remind him of how near he had been to "ruin"? By no means. "It seemed," he says, "to be calling: 'All right, my boy! *The good gods were with you*, but don't do it again!'"

He had begun work as a factory boy on a salary of one dollar and twenty cents a week. "I have made millions since," he writes, "but none of those millions gave me such happiness as my first week's earnings. I was now a helper of the family, a breadwinner." When he brought home to his father and mother his unexpected increase of two dollars and a quarter a month in wages as a messenger boy, "the surprise was great and it took some moments for them to grasp the situation, but it soon dawned on them. Then father's glance of loving pride and mother's blazing eye soon wet with tears, told their feeling. . . . No subsequent success, or recognition of any kind, ever thrilled me as this did. I cannot even imagine one that could. Here was heaven upon earth. My whole world was moved to tears of joy." In the hardships of poverty, he consoled his father: "Well, father, it will not be long before mother and you shall ride in your carriage." His father wove table cloths and peddled them, and "this wonderful woman, my mother, earned four dollars a week binding shoes." As a messenger boy, he had but one linen suit of summer clothing, "and every Saturday night, no matter if I did not return till near midnight, my mother washed those clothes and ironed them. There was nothing that heroine did not do in the struggle we were making for elbow room in the Western World." Among the other messenger boys, he says, "I was taxed with being penurious in my habits—mean, as the boys had it. I did not spend my



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extra dimes, but they knew not the reason. Every penny that I could save I knew was needed at home." Throughout his account of his early struggles he records every advance in fortune as it affected the family, and especially his mother. And when he arrived at a fair salary as a railroad man he notes "as an important change in our life," the employment of a servant to help his mother with the housework.

He gives two pages of his *Autobiography* to the incident. "There comes a time," he writes, "although the fond mother cannot see it, when a grown man has to put his arms around his saint and, kissing her tenderly, try to explain to her that it would be much better were she to let him help her in some ways"—namely, by hiring a servant. "Especially should the slaving mother live the life of ease hereafter, reading and visiting more and entertaining dear friends—in short, rising to her proper and deserved position as Her Ladyship. . . . 'Dear mother,' I pleaded, my arms around her, 'you have done everything for, and have been everything to, Tom [his brother] and me, and now let me do something for you. . . . The time has come for you to play the lady and some of these days you are to ride in your own carriage.'"

Driven by this determination to acquire a fortune so that his mother might ride in her own carriage, he grasped the first opportunity to make an investment—an investment of \$500 in Adams Express Co. stock, when, as he says, "five hundred cents was much nearer my capital." The money was obtained through an uncle, and when the stock paid Carnegie its first monthly dividend, "Eureka!" he cried. "Here's the goose that lays the golden eggs." With the same buoyancy, "trusting to be able to make payments somehow or other," he took an eighth interest in a new invention,

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the sleeping car. "The cars were a great success and their monthly receipts paid the monthly installments." While he was still a railroad employee he organized the first company in America for making iron railroad bridges (1862) and another company to make iron rails (1864). In 1865 he declined a promotion to the office of assistant general superintendent of the railroad: "I had decided to give up the railroad service altogether. . . . I was determined to make a fortune and I saw no way of doing this honestly at any salary the railroad company could afford to give, and I would not do it by indirection. When I lay down at night I was going to get a verdict of approval from the highest of all tribunals, the judge within." That he commonly had this approval is sufficiently indicated by the fact that early in his story of himself, speaking of the persecutions of the first American mosquitoes that he met, he wrote: "I do not remember that even the stinging misery of that night kept me from sleeping soundly. I could always sleep, never knowing 'horrid night, the child of hell.' "

His conscience compelled him always to do his work well and to manufacture an honest product in his output of iron and steel, and he attributes his success as a manufacturer to this insistence on "good quality." But along with a conscience that was as rigid as a Puritan's, he had a sympathy, a friendliness, a degree of sentimentality and affection that were wholly un-Puritanic; he understood and liked men; he chose his partners, his aides, his business associates, and his subordinates with an almost infallible good judgment; and therein lay his success as an organizer of large industries. When he left the office of the telegraph company to work on the railroad, he helped his chums among the messenger boys to follow him. As he was promoted

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and advanced, he gathered a circle of tried associates who moved forward with him. His loyalty bred loyalty. His *Autobiography* is a surprising record of lifelong friendships. He was rarely disappointed in his trust; and of the most serious betrayal in his experience he wrote philosophically: "I had never before been cheated and found it out so positively and so clearly. I saw that I was still young and had a good deal to learn. *Many men can be trusted*, but a few need watching."

The kindly emotionalism of his nature had another aspect. He was not only as eager as the typical Puritan to acquire an education; he became, as a boy, ardently interested in the drama and reveled in Shakespeare with a poetic enthusiasm; he developed an early taste for music and sang in a choir; he organized a debating society and enjoyed public speaking. As he succeeded in life he sought culture of every sort, patronized the arts religiously, and developed a pride in authorship that was one of the amiable weaknesses of his later years.

But it was in the moral and religious crises of his adolescence that he was most unlike the Puritan American, in spite of the superficial likeness between them. At the age of eighteen, he says, he was ignorant "of anything but what was good and pure. I do not believe, up to that time, I had ever spoken a bad word in my life and seldom heard one. I knew nothing of the base and vile." In railroad work he was "plunged at once into the company of coarse men," and he was "not happy about it." "I ate," he says, "necessarily of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil for the first time. But there were still the sweet and pure surroundings of home, where nothing coarse or wicked ever entered, and, besides, there was the world in which I dwelt with my companions, all of them refined young

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men, striving to improve themselves and become respected citizens." He reacted with disgust to the "coarse men," he says, although he hastens to add that they were not "really degraded or bad characters," and "many of them were fine young fellows who have lived to be highly respectable citizens and to occupy responsible positions." His disgust, he must have successfully concealed from them, because, as he admits, "one and all of them were most kind to me"; and he evidently imitated some of their outward aspects, because he writes at a later period, "up to this time I had been, perhaps, careless in dress and rather affected it. Great, heavy boots, loose collar, and general roughness of attire were then peculiar to the West and in our circle considered manly. I remember the first gentleman I ever saw in the service of the railway company who wore kid gloves. He was the object of derision among us who aspired to be manly men." His relations with the opposite sex were of the brotherly-sisterly variety, and it was under the influence of one of these "ideal friends" that he began, as he says, "to notice how much better it was to be gentle in tone and manner, polite and courteous to all—in short, better behaved."

The religious ferment of his adolescence worked itself out as temperately. He became, for a time, "deeply interested in the mysterious doctrines of Swedenborg "through the influence of an aunt; and she expected him to develop into "a preacher of the Word" because of his ability to "expound 'spiritual sense'"; but he "wandered," as he says, "more and more from man-made theology," and in his debating society most of the dogmas of orthodoxy "were voted down as the mistaken ideas of men of a less enlightened age," until he was able to accept it "as proven that each stage of civilization creates its own God, and that



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as man ascends and becomes better his conception of the Unknown likewise improves." "The first great loss to our circle came," he writes, "when John Phipps was killed by a fall from a horse. This struck home to all of us, yet I remember I could say to myself: 'John has, as it were, just gone home to England where he was born. We are all to follow him and live forever together.' I had then no doubts. It was not a hope I was pressing to my heart, but a certainty. . . . It would be no greater miracle that brought us into another world to live forever with our dearest than that which has brought us into this one to live a lifetime with them. Both are equally incomprehensible to finite beings. Let us therefore comfort ourselves with everlasting hope, 'as with enchantments,' as Plato recommends, never forgetting, however, that we all have our duties here and that the kingdom of heaven is within us. It also passed into an axiom with us that he who proclaims there is no hereafter is as foolish as he who proclaims there is, since neither can know, though all may and should hope. Meanwhile, 'Home our heaven' instead of 'Heaven our home' was our motto."

What you might call the unreasonable optimism of this mental attitude is in significant contrast to the unreasonable pessimism of Mark Twain's or the unreasonable idealism of Emerson's. The conscious philosophies of all three men were obviously based on subconscious predispositions that were equally beyond reason; but Carnegie's had the virtue of being a frame of mind that made it possible for him to confront the problems of life successfully, whereas Twain's at last reduced him to the impotence of despair, and Emerson's left him living in a dream that became a coma. Carnegie's qualities of mysticism, romanticism, and philanthropy are recognized by the new psychology as

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trends of suppressed sex; but his life is a startling challenge to those extreme Freudians who believe that devotion to the mother image unfits a man for an attack upon reality.

In 1868, at the age of thirty-three, he wrote a memorandum for himself that was found after his death: "Thirty-three and an income of \$50,000 per annum! By this time two years I can arrange all my business so as to secure at least \$50,000 per annum. Beyond this never earn—make no effort to increase fortune, but spend the surplus of each year for benevolent purposes. Cast aside business forever, except for others. Settle in Oxford and get a thorough education, making the acquaintance of literary men—this will take three years' active work—pay especial attention to speaking in public. Settle then in London and purchase a controlling interest in some newspaper or live review and give the general management of it attention, taking a part in public matters, especially those connected with education and improvement of the poorer class. Man must have an idol—the amassing of wealth is one of the worst species of idolatry—no idol more debasing than the worship of money. . . . I will resign business at thirty-five, but during the ensuing two years I wish to spend the afternoons in receiving instruction and in reading systematically."

He did not, of course, resign from business at thirty-five. He was drawn into it deeper and deeper by the progressive necessity of keeping up with the improvements in the manufacture of iron, of undertaking to produce steel when it began to replace iron generally, and of carrying his companies through various financial panics. But he lived up to his resolve to devote some of his surplus to "benevolent purposes," and in this he had a subconscious inspiration that came from his child-

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hood. As a boy in Dunfermline, he had heard, from his father and his uncles, "denunciations of monarchical and aristocratic government, of privilege in all its forms, the grandeur of the republican system, the superiority of America, a land peopled by our own race, a home for freemen in which every citizen's privilege was every man's right." He had consequently developed into a violent young Republican whose motto was "death to privilege," "and though," he says, "I did not know what privilege meant, my father did." As his fortune grew in America, he found himself attacked as a creature of privilege himself, and his philanthropy became partly an effort to escape this reproach. He began to feel that it was "a disgrace to die rich." His benefactions took especially the form of founding libraries, because as a boy in Pittsburgh, struggling to obtain an education while he worked, he had been given the freedom of a private library by a Colonel Anderson, who allowed working boys on Saturday afternoons to borrow each a book and take it home for a week. A further identification with his father, who had helped found the first free library in Dunfermline, stabilized this device. He became noted as a philanthropist. "Wealth," Gladstone wrote to him, "is at present like a monster threatening to swallow up the moral life of man; you by precept and by example have been teaching him to disgorge. I, for one, thank you."

Gladstone's testimonial came at a time when it was needed. During a strike in the Carnegie mills at Homestead the company had imported armed Pinkerton detectives; a local public official, who was in sympathy with the strikers, gave an order to arrest the Pinkertons as they landed in Homestead from a steamboat; a pitched battle ensued and men were killed on both sides. Carnegie was not to blame. He was abroad

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when the strike began, and at the first word of trouble in the mills he wired that he was returning. "His partners," one of them testifies, "begged him not to appear, as they were of the opinion that the welfare of the company required that he should not be in this country at the time. They knew of his extreme disposition to always grant the demands of labor, however unreasonable. . . . All the partners rejoiced that they were permitted to manage the affair in their own way." Carnegie had risen from the ranks of labor himself; he was not separated in sympathy from his men by a difference of race; no influx of foreign laborers had yet put the workingman outside his herd instinct as that influx has since put labor outside the herd-consciousness of the typical American of Carnegie's class. His previous relations with his employees gave sufficient proof that he would never have been guilty of the mistakes which his lieutenants made in his absence.

Nevertheless, he had to bear the public blame for the criminal incidents of the strike riots. "Workmen," he writes, "had been killed at the Carnegie works of which I was the controlling owner. That was sufficient to make my name a byword for years." "Nothing that I have ever had to meet in all my life, before or since, wounded me so deeply." "No pangs remain of any wound received in my business career save that at Homestead." The reproach of his privileged position was enormously increased and he was made acutely conscious of it. He resolved "to stop accumulating and begin the infinitely more serious and difficult task of wise distribution"; and when the United States Steel Corporation purchased his mills he carried out his resolve. He succeeded, before he died, in giving away publicly some three hundred and fifty million dollars.

His horror at the Homestead killings was un-



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doubtedly reflected in his subsequent horror of war. He became a determined opponent of militarism and an advocate of peace. He could not see a parade of Life Guards in London without saying to his companion: "I never see men dressed up like Merry Andrews without being saddened and indignant that in the nineteenth century the most civilized race, as we consider ourselves, still finds men willing to adopt as a profession—until lately the only profession for gentlemen—the study of the surest means of killing other men." He considered war "our deepest disgrace" which "surely must soon be abolished between civilized nations." When the first Hague Conference established a permanent tribunal to settle international disputes, its "surprising action" gave him "intense joy." "I saw in this," he says, "the greatest step toward peace that humanity had ever taken." He hoped for an "International Court for the abolition of war." "The day that International Court is established," he predicted, "will become one of the most memorable days in the world's history. It will ring the knell of man killing man—the deepest and blackest of crimes." He gave a million and a half for the building of the Temple of Peace at The Hague. "It seems to me almost too much that any individual should be permitted to perform so noble a duty as that of providing means for this Temple of Peace—the most holy building in the world because it has the holiest end in view. I do not even except St. Peter's, or any building erected to the glory of God. . . . This Temple is to bring peace, which is so greatly needed among His erring creatures. 'The highest worship of God is service to man.' " He gave ten million dollars to a board of trustees as a Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and "the abolition of war, the

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foulest blot upon our civilization." He met the German Emperor and was profoundly impressed by his claim "that he is, and always has been, for peace."

"Haunted with the feeling," as he says, that the Kaiser was "a man of destiny" from whom one might hope "something really great and good," he speculated upon whether the Emperor would "pass into history as only the preserver of peace at home" or "rise to his appointed mission as Apostle of Peace among leading civilized nations." In 1912 Carnegie presented the Kaiser with "the American address of congratulation upon his peaceful reign of twenty-five years, his hand unstained by human blood." "As I approached," he says, "to hand him the casket containing the address, he recognized me and with outstretched arms exclaimed: 'Carnegie, twenty-five years of peace, and we hope for many more.' I could not help responding: 'And in this noblest of all missions you are our chief ally.'"

His autobiography breaks off abruptly in the middle of that scene. He adds a final paragraph: "As I read this to-day (1914) what a change! The world convulsed by war as never before! Men slaying each other like wild beasts! I dare not relinquish all hope. In recent days I see another ruler coming forward upon the world stage, who may prove himself the immortal one. . . . Watch President Wilson! He has Scotch blood in his veins." And with those words his manuscript ends.

His wife explains that he was engaged in writing his autobiography in July, 1914, when "the war clouds began to gather, and when the fateful news of the 4th of August reached us, we immediately left our retreat in the hills and returned to Skibo to be more in touch with the situation. These memoirs ended at

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that time. Henceforth he was never able to interest himself in private affairs. . . . Optimist as he always was and tried to be, even in the face of the failure of his hopes, the world disaster was too much. His heart was broken." The war killed him.

Though his career was a typical American career in its outward aspect, it was obviously almost an oddity in its motive power and inspiration. The very self-sacrifice inherent in his affectionate ambition for his mother made him self-sacrificing in the sum of his benefactions. Having no Puritanic fear or hatred or contempt of himself, he did not project those emotions into his relations with others. He was a kindly, happy, optimistic man. "The world seems bright to me," he wrote, "and earth is often a real heaven—so happy I am and so thankful to the kind fates." And again: "He is the happy man who feels there is not a human being to whom he does not wish happiness, long life, and deserved success, not one in whose path he would cast an obstacle nor to whom he would not do a service if in his power."

## VI. *In Anthony Comstock and P. T. Barnum*

AS a contrast to Carnegie, let us take the modern Puritan, Anthony Comstock, who was almost a clinical example of some typical American traits morbidly exaggerated. And let us take him as he is most glowingly presented by his friend Charles G. Trumbull in Trumbull's semi-official biography, *Anthony Comstock, Fighter*.

Trumbull begins his book with an account of how Comstock, as an eighteen-year-old boy, heard that a mad dog was "running amuck" in the little village of Winnipauk, Connecticut, where he was working as a clerk in the grocery store. He took a gun and a pistol, went out alone on a mad-dog hunt, and killed the dog. The incident, to Trumbull, is symbolic of Comstock's whole career. It was, Trumbull says, "his first taste of mad-dog hunting," and he spent his life at it. According to Trumbull, he went after the dog "because he saw that the lives of others were being imperiled and no one seemed ready to accept the responsibility of ending the public peril—no one but himself"; and he kept on hunting mad dogs thereafter for the same reason. "His life," says Trumbull, "was at stake each time—but what of that? The lives of *others* were at stake, and he had been brought up to understand that moral heroism was the only thing really worth while in this life." He killed his first mad dog, according



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to Trumbull, in order to save little children from being attacked; and it was always "a source of profound gratitude to Mr. Comstock" that he got the dog "before a single child had been bitten," but it was "one of the heart sorrows of his life" that this could not be said "of the more dangerous beasts of prey against whom his life work is directed."

That this was Comstock's own view of his peculiar career is sufficiently evident from Trumbull's biography. He saw himself defending children from "defilement" at the risk of his life and his reputation. Sustained by his reliance on God, he fought evil wherever he saw it. He "fought the devil," in fact; and, says Trumbull, "the devil has had greater difficulty in making deposits in childhood banks, to draw upon at will, since Anthony Comstock entered business against him." But although this was Comstock's conscious psychology and his intellectual rationalization of his conduct, one does not have to read Trumbull's book very carefully in order to find, below these heroic appearances, an entirely different set of motives and impulses in Comstock's character.

His childhood was fanatically Puritanical. He was born (1844) of parents who were Puritan Congregationalists near New Canaan, Connecticut. They spent nearly the whole of every Sunday at church and Sunday school, with a lunch "eaten in the horse sheds" and a dinner at home, followed by the closing church service of the day. "Daily prayers were conducted every morning before breakfast." The mother's "watchwords" for her children were "purity, principle, duty." She told them Bible stories and stories "sometimes from other sources, but always they were stories of moral heroism." Trumbull reports a conversation with Comstock: "'Such stories, to-day, fascinate me,'

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Mr. Comstock will tell you. 'I don't care *that*'—with a contemptuous snap of his finger—'for your blood-and-thunder stories. But I do enjoy the story of any man or woman, boy or girl, who sacrifices self for principle.' Harking back to his mother again, he says with earnestness: 'I'm not entitled to much credit if I stand out against some things in a way that makes people characterize me as puritanical'; and he adds with some conviction, 'I cannot but feel that the teachings of my mother are vastly superior to anything that my opponents have to offer me.'"

She taught him the Puritanism of St. Paul, set him on St. Paul's side of the fight between the Flesh and the Spirit, and made him ready to sacrifice himself in the war on the Flesh. The fight, of course, began in the boy himself. He was "healthily mischievous," says Trumbull. That he had strong fleshly instincts to overcome is probable from Trumbull's description of him at the age of sixty-nine: "Standing about five feet ten in his shoes, he carries his two hundred and ten pounds of muscle and bone so well that you would not judge him to weigh over a hundred and eighty. His Atlas shoulders, of enormous breadth and squareness, his chest of prodigious girth, surmounted by a bull-like neck, are in keeping with a biceps and a calf of exceptional size and iron solidity. His legs are short, and remind one somewhat of tree trunks."

Says Trumbull: "While the boy's childhood days were chiefly filled with things that make for good, yet there were vicious characters in school and on the farm—some of the hired help being abundantly so—which was a great sorrow to the mother. Mr. Comstock bears testimony to the common experience of many when he says that certain things that were brought into his life in those boyhood days started memories

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and lines of temptation that are harder for him to overcome than anything that ever came into his life in later years." It seems safe to assume, from these two sentences, that the "great sorrow" of Comstock's mother was caused by the effect upon her son of his association with "vicious characters in school and on the farm."

The assumption is supported by an incident which Trumbull relates of Comstock's boyhood. "One of his duties was to drive the cows home from pasture every night. On the way lived a certain boy whose house he was forbidden to visit"—one of the vicious characters, presumably. "One night Anthony did visit there, while coming back with the cows, and the boy brought out some home-made wine which he warmly recommended. The boys drank it together. Anthony felt somewhat hilarious that evening at home, and was glad to get to bed." In less bashful words, he was drunk. "The next morning he had quite a 'head' when he woke up. But he got up, and he and his father retired to the woodshed"—where the boy was punished. "The reformation was quick, drastic, complete."

Trumbull treats the incident with charming lightness, but it gives us a clew to the hidden meaning of the mad-dog hunt. The dog, it seems, "belonged to the local saloon-keeper." Says Trumbull: "The boy who put an end to the dog wanted to see the more dangerous work of its owner closed up." So one night, all alone, he "went up to the ginmill, wrenched off a shutter, climbed in, opened the faucets, and drained off on to the floor every drop of liquor in the place . . . and retired with something of the same consciousness of having done a good job completely that was felt when the first dog lay dead and harmless."

In other words, Comstock, suffering from remorse

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and self-hatred because he had yielded to his neighbor's homebrew, saw in the saloon-keeper another tempter like the bad boy. He relieved some of his hatred of himself by killing the saloon-keeper's dog, and then he sought a further outlet for his emotion by wrecking the saloon. In his conscious mind he explained his impulse as a defense of the children who might be bitten by the dog and of the men and women who might be victimized by the saloon. This, as we have already pointed out, is a common device of the Puritan mind. A hatred of the Flesh in yourself commonly gets its drainage as a hatred of the Flesh in others, and you do a sort of vicarious penance for your own abhorred weakness by punishing another's sin. If Comstock had been physically inferior, his hatred of his animal self might have made him a dejected self-convicted sinner; but he had a strong physique and a strong ego that was obviously supported by his mother's love and her pride in him. Consequently, he projected his hatred of himself outwardly upon the world and proceeded to fight himself valiantly in the person of the devil and all those who "aid the work of the devil."

The association between Puritanism and drunkenness is as interesting as the enmity between them. Alcohol drugs the conscious mind and releases the inhibited impulses in the subconscious; the more religiously these impulses are repressed the greater the pressure of temptation to escape into drunkenness. This may be the reason why drunkenness has been a national vice among the Puritanic northern nations, and not among the less repressed un-Puritanic peoples of the south. At any rate, the Puritan antagonism to alcohol seems obviously due to alcohol's jail delivery of the subconscious desires which Puritanism imprisons.



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It is another form of the fight against the Flesh. It had that aspect clearly in Anthony Comstock.

While he was a clerk, then, in the Winnipauk grocery (about 1862) he began his career as "a fighter" by killing a saloon-keeper's dog and subsequently wrecking the saloon. Service as a soldier during the Civil War (1863-65) interrupted his censorial activities; but after he had returned to commercial life he resumed them. "He had come to know young business men, over and over again, whose lives were plainly being ruined by their interest in the obscene pictures and literature and other devilish things that they had easy access to." Here was a new appearance of the "lines of temptation" that had caused his mother such great sorrow. Here was the Flesh at its barest. He had been taught to see these instincts as animal impulses—as mad dogs—that were to be exterminated, as we have said, not domesticated and socialized. He went gunning for them again.

While he was employed as a clerk in a New York dry-goods house, he heard of a bookseller in the neighborhood who was selling obscene books and pictures; he denounced the bookseller to the police and went to see him arrested. A short time later he complained of another bookseller to a policeman, and the policeman tipped off the dealer. "Comstock went to police headquarters, preferred charges, and had the man dismissed from the force." He was attacked by some of the newspapers, but the most reputable of them took up his cause. With the aid of a reporter he procured the arrest of seven booksellers. In an interval of inactivity he drove a neighboring saloon-keeper out of business. Then he "got possession of a clew that there were four men who were responsible for the printing and publishing" of the books for whose sale the book-

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sellers were being punished. He appealed for help from the Young Men's Christian Association in order to prosecute these publishers, and his letter came to the notice of Morris K. Jesup, the philanthropist, who backed Comstock from that day. With the assistance of the Y. M. C. A. he succeeded in rounding up the publishers and destroying their books and the plates from which these had been printed; he lobbied successfully in Washington for the passage of a bill that should close the mails to the traffic against which he was fighting; and he was made a special agent of the Post Office Department, without salary, to help enforce the law (1873). He was "still in the dry-goods business, conducting his anti-vice work entirely as an 'aside,' " the Y. M. C. A. paying his expenses. Because of attacks upon him as "an agent" of the Y. M. C. A., a majority of the governing committee deemed it wise to incorporate a separate organization for the continuance of his crusade; and thus was born "The New York Society for the Suppression of Vice," of which Comstock remained secretary to the day of his death.

He now had financial support for his life-work and he went at it with inexhaustible energy and enthusiasm. He prosecuted and closed up the lotteries that were then being advertised and carried on in defiance of the law. He pursued bogus bankers and brokers and mining companies, watch and jewelry swindlers, quack doctors, and various cheats and charlatans that used the mails. He pointed with pride to these branches of his activities, in his appeals for public support, whenever any attempt was made to oust him from his authority as a special agent of the Post Office Department; but the work of his heart was obviously the ferreting out and suppressing of every form of

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sexual expression in print that he could reach; and he finally reached so far that he even brought into court the clerk in the office of the Art Students' League who was giving out a prospectus of the League containing reproductions of specimen drawings from the nude that had been made by students in the League's life class.

Here again, probably, as in the case of drunkenness, we have Puritanism fighting its shadow. It is the joke of Paris that the traffic in obscene pictures, there, is almost wholly supported by visitors from more Puritanic countries. No person whose sex instinct has been healthily educated is likely either to take much interest in, or to show much alarm at, such books and pictures as Comstock gave his life to prosecuting. Their circulation in America and the anxiety with which that circulation is opposed are both—like drunkenness and prohibition—the obverse and the reverse of the same national characteristic.

Comstock, of course, aroused much enmity. Attempts were made to bribe him, to intimidate him, to kill him with an infernal machine, to murder him on the streets, to infect him with germs sent through the mails. He was attacked in Congress and criticized in editorials and misrepresented in the news. He consoled himself with the thought which he expresses in the preface to his volume *Frauds Exposed*: "I cannot expect to have better treatment than our blessed Master." He saw his critics and opponents either as wretches who were profiting by fraud and by the debauchery of the young, or as "infidels and liberals who defend these moral cancer-planters," as he put it. And there he had a great public advantage over those of his opponents who objected to his interference with the freedom of art and literature and the desire of the artist to mirror life with some fidelity to its least

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Puritanic aspects. Those opponents were, of necessity, men and women who had not been trained in the prevailing codes of religion and morals—"infidels and liberals"—and he easily defeated them by arousing public antagonism against them. He seems, indeed, to have been greatly assisted in his career by the fact that Robert G. Ingersoll consistently fought and denounced him.

He was, in many ways, a very happy man. He thoroughly enjoyed his job. He showed, in his contact with newspaper reporters, a hearty gusto in his descriptions of the obscenities which he prosecuted. By the nature of things, his work was never ended. He had an inexhaustible supply of objects upon which to project his hatred, and he was so contentedly unaware of his own psychology that he could boast, in his *Frauds Exposed*, that he wrote "with malice toward none, but with unbounded sympathy and charity toward the multitudes who each year are defrauded through the mails, or cursed in mind, body, and soul by obscene matter."

Outside of his sex obsession, he seems to have lived a placid, normal life. He showed balance and good judgment in his court appearances and carried on his official relations with the machinery of justice sensibly. If he had lived in earlier Puritan days, he might easily have been a distinguished governing figure and a tower of righteousness in public life—though his name would probably have come down to us horribly associated with the cruelest excesses of the New England witch-hunts.

It is illuminating to put beside Comstock the genial showman, P. T. Barnum, who came from the same New England state as Comstock, and began his career



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working in a Connecticut country store like Comstock, and then went on to sell lottery tickets and keep a saloon and engage in some of the milder forms of that public exploitation which Comstock so righteously abhorred. Barnum was in many ways as typical a product of Puritan America as Comstock was. Like Comstock in his most characteristic qualities, he exaggerated traits that are considered markedly American. And it is a measure of the practical value of the new psychology that it can somewhat explain the hitherto inexplicable difference between these two outstanding types of contemporaneous Yankees, and at least partly solve the puzzle of their derivation from a common origin.

Phineas Taylor Barnum was born (1810) in Bethel, Connecticut, which was a Puritan community; and he was presumably trained by his mother to a godly state of soul-fear, for he told a reporter, in his old age: "I was brought up in the fear of hell, and when I went to Methodist prayer meetings, at the age of thirteen or fourteen, I used to go home and pray and cry and beg God to take me out of existence if He would only save me; but I didn't see much chance for me, in the way they put it." At the same time, he was, from his earliest infancy, under the influence of his mother's father, Phineas Taylor, after whom he was named. Taylor was a Universalist, in revolt against the Puritan Presbyterianism of the community, and a bitter critic of it; his effect on P. T. Barnum was obviously antagonistic to the mother's training; and the conflict between those two influences in Barnum goes a long way toward explaining the peculiar quirks and contradictions in his character.

Phineas Taylor's religion, Universalism, was an attempt to escape the most oppressive excesses of the

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Puritan's psychic anxiety, by believing in the "final forgiveness, holiness, and happiness of all created moral beings." Taylor was a hotel-keeper, and among his cronies was a Universalist preacher who enjoyed his pipe and his glass in the tavern. Barnum says in his autobiography that he was early "impressed with the belief that the clergy were considerably more than human," and his grandfather's genial ideas of religion were presumably given an almost divine sanction for the boy when the convivial preacher indorsed them.

What those ideas of religion were, Barnum sufficiently indicates in an anecdote of his days in Sunday school. The clergyman, his grandfather's friend, had asked the members of the Sunday-school class to tell what they thought was "the one thing needful" to salvation. Barnum's written reply, as recorded in his autobiography, was as follows: "To believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, follow in his footsteps, love God and obey his Commandments, love our fellow man, and embrace every opportunity of ministering to his necessities. In short, the one thing needful is to live a life that we can always look on with satisfaction, and be enabled ever to contemplate its termination with trust in Him who has so kindly vouchsafed it to us, surrounding us with innumerable blessings, if we have but the heart and wisdom to receive them in a proper manner."

The clergyman pronounced this a "correct answer," and his decision, of course, made it infallibly so for the boy. It remained for Barnum, throughout his life, a ritual which by its repetition always gave him comfort. The approbation that he won, whenever he uttered it, preserved its magic power for him; and, as the religious creed which he tried consciously to follow, it was probably the basic inspiration of his

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cheerfulness and kindliness and hearty piety, even when, as the greatest charlatan of his day, he was making a fortune out of museum fakes which he foisted upon the credulity of the public.

Those amusing humbugs were far more typical of the Yankee than Barnum's religion was. Barnum consciously saw them as practical jokes on the people, and he believed that he had inherited his love of practical jokes from his grandfather, the jolly tavern-keeper. But it is evident from his autobiography that we have here an imitation, not an inheritance. The grandfather, Barnum writes, "would go farther, wait longer, work harder, and contrive deeper to carry out a practical joke, than for anything else under heaven." He played a practical joke on his grandchild at birth, by giving him a deed to five acres of worthless land called Ivy Island and by then subsequently persuading the child, with the aid of his parents, that he was heir to a priceless estate. The joke culminated in a cruel disillusionment when the boy was finally taken to see the inheritance upon which he had been publicly priding himself for years—and found it an inaccessible and wholly worthless piece of swamp.

Such an impressive example of cheerful deceit might well have been enough in itself to prepare young Barnum for his career, but it was not an isolated incident. He grew up in an atmosphere of practical joking and of shrewd trading tricks that were profitable practical jokes of a very doubtful honesty. He says: "In nearly every New England village, at the time of which I write, there could be found from six to twenty social, jolly, story-telling, joke-playing wags and wits, who would spend the evenings in relating anecdotes, describing their various adventures, playing off practical jokes upon one another, and engaging in

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every project out of which a little fun could be extracted." Their club center in Bethel was the village store in which Barnum began his business career. He gives page after page of these jokes in his memoirs. He also gives numerous examples of Connecticut business methods that were as smart as the jokes.

We have here an aspect of American Puritanism that is little understood. The Puritan was unable to take any joy out of his conquest of nature, because he felt that he won only by God's permission, and he had to remain humble and self-depreciative in order to insure further benefits. But in competition between man and man there was no taboo against joy in outwitting a competitor. This was a permitted pleasure. In the form of the practical joke, it was a comparatively innocent pleasure. In the form of a slick trade, it was less innocent; but, as we have said already, the Puritan idea of sin was the Pauline idea—the idea of sin as a pleasure of the senses, not the idea of sin as an injury to others—and the Yankee descendant of the Puritan had a minimum of honesty in barter. He could boast of his humbugging and hoodwinking in a business deal and laugh over it as he laughed over a good practical joke. Barnum, in his museum fakes, was a typical Yankee. He relates many of the hoaxes that he "put over" on the public, and he relates them as gayly as he tells of the practical jokes of his grandfather or the business methods of the Connecticut storekeeper. And he notes that his public seemed to be amused by his humbugs, even when they knew that they were being deceived.

But there is a certain falseness about the way in which Barnum, at one moment, boasts jovially of some of his exploits and, at the next, lies obviously about others in guilty self-defense. It is probable that he



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knew he was rather a rogue and that he had a subconscious desire to be one, in imitation of his early exemplars; but, to enjoy that ambition, he had to protect himself from the anger of God and of his fellow men. He protected himself from public opinion as the practical joker protects himself from the anger of his victim: he represented himself as an honest and jovial lover of humanity, who meant no real harm and did no one any real injury; by this means he placed the public in the position of the joker's victim, who is a "short sport" if he gets angry at the jolly good fellow who has victimized him. That device, however, does not placate God and relieve conscience; and there is evidence that whenever Barnum's anxiety and sense of sin piled up too great a weight, he was driven to escape it by other psychological devices that made him seem a very complicated and eccentric character.

Take, for example, the strange incident of his "martyrdom" as the publisher of *The Herald of Freedom*, a weekly newspaper in Danbury, Connecticut, when he was a young man of twenty-two.

He had started out, at the age of twelve, on his career as a jocund exploiter of human credulity by getting up lotteries and selling lottery tickets, as his grandfather had done before him; and he combined this activity with his work as clerk in country stores in Bethel and in the village of Grassy Plains, near by. At seventeen, he went to Brooklyn and opened a porter-house. He sold it and took a position as bartender in another porter-house in New York City. At eighteen he returned to Bethel and opened a fruit and confectionery shop in which he also sold ale and oysters; and at the same time he peddled lottery tickets throughout the neighboring counties. At nineteen he was in New York again, looking into the profits of a prospective

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lottery business in Pittsburgh. That winter he married a Bethel girl, Charity Hallett, and settled down to being a country storekeeper and lottery salesman in Bethel, with branches of the latter business in the neighboring towns. He continued this for two years, and then suddenly he broke out in revolt against religious "oppression," wrote newspaper articles about the dangers of a clerical control of politics; and, when he could not persuade the local newspaper to publish his contributions, he founded his own weekly paper, *The Herald of Freedom*, and plunged into religious and political controversy.

It is possible that the religious "oppression" which so suddenly aroused him was a religious crusade against public lotteries, since these were prohibited by law in Connecticut soon afterward. But when, in his newspaper, he accused a local deacon of being a usurer, was sued for libel and sentenced to sixty days in jail, he accepted his martyrdom and gloried in it in a way that was vaguely masochistic. In a letter written from the jail he says, "After the judge had given his cursed charge I was advised by many to forfeit the bonds, which were but \$100, but I chose to go to prison, thinking that such a step would be the means of opening many eyes, as it no doubt will." He calls his sentence "unhallowed," the judge "a lump of superstition." He says, "The bar and seat of the judge were filled with priests, there being no less than eight present." He sees himself as a martyr. "The same spirit governs my enemies that . . . burned to death Michael Servetus by order of John Calvin." But he will be vindicated and canonized. "The people are more enlightened than in the days of Calvin, and they will, upon reading my trial, express their indignation at such oppression and persecution."

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This attitude of revolt against the clergy so differs from his previous and subsequent acceptance of them that one is led to suspect Barnum of projecting upon them a fight against his own conscience. In the young Puritan such a revolt is usually a transference of a sex guilt; and in the latest biography of Barnum, by M. R. Werner, some evidence is indicated that supports this explanation. At the age of thirty-seven he was overcome with a sleepless conviction of sin which he rationalized as a temptation to drunkenness. "He was awfully conscious," says Werner, "of having throughout his life pursued a course of wrong-doing, pernicious in its effect not only on himself, but also on the community." He got out of bed, went to his wine cellar, and knocked the heads off his champagne bottles. When he told his wife what he had done, she congratulated him in a flood of tears; she had spent many nights, she said, weeping in fear that he would become an habitual drunkard. He became instead a temperance crank, and he carried his zeal so far that when, years later in Bridgeport, he offered land and houses to workingmen at cost, he stipulated in his contracts of sale that the purchasers must pledge themselves to abstain from the use of whisky and tobacco.

"Lust and liquor" lie so close together in the mind of the Puritan, that the latter commonly substitutes for the former. It may have been so in Barnum (see the footnote in Werner's biography, page 314). But, less deeply subconscious, there was probably his conviction of charlatanism, and it seems to have been this conviction—overlying other trends, perhaps—that set him in revolt against the clergy at twenty-two, woke him to a sudden temperance conversion at thirty-seven, and throughout his life made him so picturesque and contradictory a public character.

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At one moment in his autobiography he presents himself as the jovial good fellow who is hoaxing the public without doing them any great harm; at the next, he is futilely maintaining that he was himself deceived by one of the grosser humbugs that had been supported by a reprehensible forgery. He describes with relish his early schooling in the cheating of a country store, and then he adds, virtuously: "Such a school would 'cut eye teeth,' but if it did not cut conscience, morals, and integrity up by the roots, it would be because the scholars quit before their education was completed." He boasts of how cleverly he lied in his advertisements of his museum exhibits, and then he pleads that, having drawn the crowd with false promises, he always gave them their money's worth in the real curiosities and entertainments that he provided for them. Having deceived the public to his own advantage by some procured press story, whenever one of his victims wrote to him privately for further information, he avoided continuing the deceit. His exhibits and entertainments were scrupulously "moral"; he showed wax-works that preached a lecture against drunkenness, and he always kept temperance pledges in the box office for those who might be converted by the horrors of his tableaux. Subconsciously, he seems to have had the same contempt for the human race that Twain had, founded, as in Twain, upon a contempt for himself; but he felt that it was sinful for him to have such a feeling; one ought to love one's neighbor; so he alternated between making money on his famous theory that "there is a sucker born every minute," and then, by jovial, kindly word and philanthropic act denying his guilt to his pride, his God, and his fellows.

When he left Bethel (1834) after the failure of his *Herald of Freedom*, he brought his wife and daughter



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to New York to look for a "business opportunity." He worked for a time as a drummer for a Broadway cap store, tried to get work as a bartender, opened a boarding-house with his wife, and bought an interest in a grocery. In 1835 he came upon the sort of business opportunity that appealed to him. He bought, for a thousand dollars, an old negress named Joice Heth, who claimed that she was 161 years old and that she had nursed George Washington. With her and a forged bill of sale from George Washington's father as her credentials, he began his triumphant career as a showman in New York. By 1842, after various ups and downs, he had succeeded in buying the American Museum on lower Broadway, giving as part security in the purchase that worthless five acres of swamp, called Ivy Island, with which his grandfather had hoaxed him as a child. Within five years, by virtue of an ingenuity that amounted to genius, an endless application, and the most astounding fertility of invention in working the press, he earned a fortune in his museum and made his name famous.

By 1849, he was suffering from the sense that, as he said, "my name has long been associated with 'humbug' and the American public suspect that my capacities do not extend beyond the power to exhibit a stuffed monkey skin or [as?] a dead mermaid." He decided that he could afford to lose \$50,000 rehabilitating his reputation by bringing to America, "in the zenith of her life and celebrity," as he put it, "the greatest musical wonder in the world," Jenny Lind. He set out to transform himself from a showman into an impresario, and in the process he touched off as surprising an attack of hysteria as ever convulsed the Puritan American mind.

Jenny Lind was a very religious young woman who

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had decided, as Werner says, "that to sing in opera was immoral," because "the stage was immoral," and "opera was merely drama set to music." She had consistently refused to sing in Paris because France was immoral, and she hesitated about singing in Russia, according to Werner, "because Russia was too much like France." This religiosity showed in her voice, which was as sweetly virginal as a boy soprano's. Hans Christian Andersen declared that through her he "first became sensible of the holiness of Art." Her praises, he says, "were sounded everywhere, the praises not of the artist only, but of the woman." When Washington Irving heard her sing, he wrote of her: "I cannot say how much of my admiration goes to her singing, how much to herself. As a singer, she appears to me of the very first order; as a specimen of woman-kind, a little more. She is enough of herself to counter-balance all the evil that the world is threatened with by the great convention of women." The Mayor of Boston, welcoming her on behalf of its citizens, assured her: "It is not your superhuman musical endowments that have captivated our senses; it is your unblemished private character. . . . We have come to testify respect to genius and virtue."

What Washington Irving and the Mayor of Boston and the rest of America knew of her private character, they had learned from Barnum's carefully directed publicity. He had not staked his money on her voice so much as on her angelic reputation, and he played that at every turn. As his manager said, he succeeded "wonderfully in always keeping Jenny's 'angel' side outside with the public." He advertised her everywhere as a sort of musical Florence Nightingale who sang only in order to obtain money so that she might donate it to charity. He made her appear the sort

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of woman that any Puritan might be able to fall in love with, no matter how inhibiting was his fear of the Flesh; and when to that appearance she added the music of her serenely passionless voice, her devout admirers were moved to heights of ecstasy truly religious.

She was, in fact, the first of those child-women that are the natural stage idols of the typical American—like Maude Adams, yesterday, and Mary Pickford to-day. No actress who is a sex symbol can ever compete with them in popularity. They are commonly destroyed in the public adoration when they marry, and it is the astute theatrical manager who drops them when they take a husband. They must present to their devotees the appearance of being the sort of woman that Puritanism has striven to produce, the woman who arouses only the protective instinct in the male. In their pure presence the typical American feels contrition, salvation, religious uplift. They exorcise his devil for him, and open the gates of heaven, and he weeps. "It was impossible to doubt the Resurrection," wrote Lyman Abbott, "while Jenny Lind was singing 'I know that my Redeemer liveth.' She seemed a celestial witness; to doubt her testimony was to doubt her veracity." (And, as Werner comments, "surely Jenny Lind would not have lied about such a thing as the Resurrection.")

The enthusiasm which she aroused in her public and her critics amounted, under Barnum's artful excitation, to a temporary insanity. The *New York Herald* considered her arrival in the world as "significant an event as the appearance of Dante, Tasso, Raphael, Shakespeare, Goethe, Thorwaldsen or Michael Angelo"; and, indeed, if Barnum had brought all these immortals to New York on one ship and put

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them on exhibition together in his museum, the cheers of the public and the superlatives of the newspapers could not have been either louder or funnier. A mob of 30,000 persons received her at the dock in New York; 4,000 paid a shilling each to get seats at the auction sale of tickets for her first concert; and Castle Garden, which held 10,000, was packed night after night with enthusiasts who cheered her "like a lunatic asylum" when she sang. A Broadway hatter named Genin made himself profitably conspicuous by paying \$225 for the first ticket sold at the auction; and when a man in Iowa found that he was wearing a Genin hat, "he was urged to give his neighbors an opportunity for distinction" by auctioning it off, and he sold it "to an excited townsman for fourteen dollars." The *Herald* declared: "Jenny Lind is the most popular woman in the world at this moment—perhaps the most popular that ever was in it." Yet less than two years later, after she had left Barnum's management and broken her charm for the Puritan by marrying her pianist, her farewell concert in the same Castle Garden was only moderately successful; and the once so delirious *Herald* said, "There has been very little of the classic or pure artistic in her concerts; and she has not been applauded as an artist, but as a clever vocalist."

Barnum made another fortune out of his management of Jenny Lind. But he was not a good business man; he did not understand, as he said, "the details of accounts and a credit business; my business always has been a cash business—'pay before you go in.' " He invested in land schemes and factories which did not prosper, and in the autumn of 1855, within four years of the Jenny Lind triumph, he was in bankruptcy. By lecturing, writing his autobiography, and touring abroad with some of his museum freaks, he paid off his



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debts in five years, but he did not arrive again at any assured success until he went into partnership in 1870 with an experienced and astute circus man named W. C. Coup, who organized "Barnum's Circus" and made it a national institution. After Coup's breakdown from overwork, Barnum formed a partnership with another circus genius, James A. Bailey, in "Barnum and Bailey's Greatest Show on Earth." Bailey was a true anxiety neurotic, always working and worrying, afraid of publicity, opposed to humbug, and determined that the circus should show only genuine freaks and employ only the most skilled performers. He traveled with the tents and never left "the lot" until the canvas had been struck. Barnum rarely appeared except to drive around the ring in a carriage, bowing to the applause of the crowd. He wisely let Bailey do the work and took—what Bailey did not want—the notoriety.

His old age was comfortable, respectable, and happy. He had been subject, says Werner, to periods "of depression and remorse," and in these moments, "goaded by his sincere piety," he "feared that he would roast in hell for the Buffalo hunt, General Tom Thumb's age, the model of Niagara Falls, the Feejee Mermaid, and the Woolly Horse, and maybe for sins which he kept carefully to himself." He sought salvation in temperance, piety, free tickets for the clergy to his unimpeachably respectable "Moral Show," and public benefactions. In the lavish ostentation of his gifts to Bridgeport, where he lived, he was the typical American philanthropist who has earned a fortune by exploiting the public and obtains a sort of remission of sin by making a charitable restitution. He died at the age of eighty, with an estate of four million dollars, a kindly, genial, and admired old man.

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He is generally credited with having been the inventor of the modern American circus—which he was not. He is thanked for having wakened America to the world of music—and the musical world to the possibilities of great profit in America—when he imported Jenny Lind; but he was in no way musical, any more than as a menagerie owner he was fond of animals; and when he brought Jenny Lind to America he had never heard her sing. More justly, he is celebrated—in the phrase “Barnum was right”—for the technic of humbug which has since been practiced by so many thousands of advertising agents, publicity men, campaign managers, theatrical managers, editors, reporters, and what not. At the bottom of their predatory deceit is that original Puritan lack of social responsibility which comes of seeing private sin as the only immorality. And in relation to this aspect of the American mind, Barnum and his career are most significant.

## VII. *In Benjamin Franklin*

THUS far the typical Americans whom we have been considering have all appeared in one way or another badly adjusted to reality, as the psychologists say. Lincoln showed it in his melancholy, Mark Twain in his despair, Emerson by his introversion, Comstock by his fanaticism, and Barnum by his attempts to escape from the reputation which, like a jocular hair shirt, he had himself assumed in his autobiography. Let us now consider two Americans who seem to have made better terms with their environment—Benjamin Franklin, who worked out what you might call a pragmatistical adjustment, and Henry W. Longfellow, who achieved a more romantic one.

Franklin was an American of strictly Puritan descent and parentage. His ancestors in England had become Protestants in the early days of the Reformation, and they continued faithful through the persecutions of Queen Mary's reign. All remained in the Church of England until toward the end of Charles II's life, when Benjamin Franklin (an uncle) and Josiah (the father) joined the dissenters. In 1682, Josiah emigrated to New England, with his first wife and three children, in search, principally, of religious freedom. That wife died after she had borne him seven children, and he then married Abiah Folger, daughter of Peter Folger, whom Cotton Mather described as "a godly learned Englishman." Josiah Franklin, by his second marriage, had ten more children, of whom Benjamin was

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the eighth, born January 6, 1706, and baptized in the Old South Church of Boston on that day.

As the fifteenth of a family of seventeen, Benjamin was not likely to be annoyed by too much parental attention. His mother's treatment of him as an infant is sufficiently indicated in a letter of advice which he once wrote humorously to another mother, concerning the care of her baby: "Pray let him have everything he likes—I think it of great consequence while the features of the face are forming: it gives them a pleasant air, and, that being once become natural and fixed by habit, the face is ever after the handsomer for it, and on that much of a person's good fortune and success in life may depend. Had I been crossed as much in my infant likings and inclinations as you know I have been of later years, I should have been, I was going to say, not near so handsome." And it is certain that a good disposition, if not good looks, is often established in the deep contentment of those days of cradled comfort. The irritated and uncomfortable baby almost invariably becomes a maladjusted adult; and the notable serenity with which Franklin endured being "crossed" in his "later years," was assuredly a quality which he began to acquire in the subconscious peacefulness of his vegetative infancy.

His mother had evidently little time to give him, in the way of care or correction, after he was out of her arms. (He scarcely mentions her in his autobiography.) And as soon as he was able to crawl, he must have been left to the mercies of the older children. The first year of an infant's life is given up to a wholly self-preservative attempt to obtain food and creature comfort, and his assured success in that effort seems to lay the foundations of self-confidence. But when he comes out of his cradle he finds himself dependent,



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in every way, upon the good will of those around him, and his omnipotent egotism quickly schools itself to pay in self-sacrifice for his pleasures. In such a large family, Franklin must have made this adjustment very young; and whatever his egotism in later life, he easily suppressed and disguised it in order to win and hold the approbation of those around him. Moreover—and this is even more important—his indifferent relations with his mother set him in no sentimental or idealistic attitude to woman. He appears never in his life to have had a romantic love affair. Woman to him was always either an object of light love or a practical wife and housekeeper. His deepest love was for his father, and throughout his life his greater interest was in men.

It is evident that he early seized upon intellectual dexterity to maintain his ego against his older brothers, for he learned to read so young that he was unable to recall a time when he had not been reading. His father had devoted him to the Church at birth, "as the tithe [tenth] of his sons," and his uncle Benjamin, approving of this ambition, proposed to give the child all the short-hand volumes of sermons which he had been in the habit of taking down. Both the father and the uncle were great readers, and the uncle was a poet, besides. The latter addressed to Franklin, at the age of four, a pious acrostic which is interesting because it expressed an ideal of character that largely remained a moral ambition with Franklin throughout his life:

*"Be to thy parents an obedient son;  
Each day let duty constantly be done;  
Never give way to sloth, or lust, or pride,  
If free you'd be from thousand ills beside;  
Above all ills be sure avoid the shelf;*

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*Man's danger lies in Satan, sin, and self;  
In virtue, learning, wisdom, progress make;  
Ne'er shrink at suffering for thy Saviour's sake.  
Fraud and all falsehood in thy dealings flee.  
Religious always in thy station be;  
Adore the maker of thy inward part,  
Now's the accepted time, give him thy heart;  
Keep a good conscience, 'tis a constant friend;  
Like judge and witness this thy acts attend.  
In heart with bended knee, alone, adore  
None but the Three in One for evermore."*

He was saved from the ministry, however, first by the poverty of his father, and then, it would seem, by the influence of his brother, James. Although he distinguished himself by his precocity in the grammar school at the age of eight, his father could not afford to educate him for a profession, and at the age of nine he was sent to a business school. Here he failed in arithmetic, and at ten he was taken from school and put to work as errand boy and candle-dipper in his father's soap works. Apparently he accepted these paternal decisions meekly, but he must have been storing up a feeling of subconscious revolt, for he so disliked candle-making that he was tempted to run away to sea, like an elder brother before him. His father wisely took him on a tour of the various trades of Boston, to see whether he could find one more to his liking. He chose to be apprenticed to a cutler, but this came to nothing because of a difference about the fee that was to be paid for teaching him the trade. It was decided, finally, that he should be a printer, because of his fondness for books, and he was indentured (1718) to his brother James for nine years' service, from the age of twelve to twenty-one.

James Franklin was a liberal who was rapidly going

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radical. He became notorious as the publisher of the *New England Courant*, a journal that ridiculed the government and religion of Massachusetts. A description of his paper, attributed to Cotton Mather, accuses it of being "full-freighted with nonsense, unmanliness, raillery, profaneness, immorality, arrogance, calumnies, lies, contradictions, and what not, all tending to quarrels and divisions and to debauch and corrupt the minds and manners of New England." And James's influence over his younger brother confirmed Benjamin in a revolt against orthodox Puritanism that had already begun to show in him.

His father's library consisted largely of religious books of a controversial character in defense of Puritan dogma, and the reading of these did not have the effect of confirming Benjamin in his father's faith, but of making him skeptical about it. Boyle's sermons against Deism left him convinced by the quotations from the Deists rather than by Boyle's arguments in answer to them. He inclined to accept the dicta of the Deists—forerunners of New England Unitarianism—that reduced Christianity to a code of morals rather than a revealed religion, questioned the orthodox idea of God, and denied the immortality of the soul. This evidence of his revolt against the Heavenly Father would be accepted by the new psychology as justifying a suspicion that Benjamin was in subconscious revolt against his earthly father, but his father's influence over him was still determinative. He developed a taste for poetry and wrote some light verses which his brother printed and sent him around to sell. "This," he says, "flattered my vanity, for they sold wonderfully well; but my father discouraged me by ridiculing my performance and telling me verse-makers were generally beggars." And he gave up any ambition to be

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a poet, in spite of the encouragement of his brother and his uncle Benjamin.

His father, happening on some arguments that he had written to a friend, gave him a kindlier criticism on his prose style. "I saw," Franklin says, "the justice of his remarks, and then grew more attentive to the manner in writing, and determined to endeavor at improvement." He took Addison's *Spectator* as his model and practiced to imitate it by reading an Addison essay, writing a summary of it, trying to reconstruct it, later, from his summary, and then comparing his version with the original. This he often did on Sunday as an excuse for evading church attendance, which his father still insisted on. The greater value of the literary exercise helped him to outwit his conscience; and by improving his prose, as his father wished, he obeyed the father, even while he rebelled against him in the matter of attending church.

He had begun to contribute articles to his brother's paper, and these were bitterly witty and satirical revolts against his Puritan environment. His early humor, in fact, was not unlike Mark Twain's in its subconscious origin. His brother was warned by the government that as the publisher of the *Courant* he was in danger of prosecution. He disregarded the warning, and for a "Scandalous Libel" against the civil authorities he was arrested, tried, and imprisoned for four weeks. Benjamin, then sixteen years old, issued the paper in his brother's name. It continued, as the authorities complained, "boldly reflecting on His Majesty's Government and on the administration of it in this province, the Ministry, Churches and College"—Harvard College, which Benjamin, in an anonymous article, had lampooned as a temple of fraud, controlled by money. Finally an issue of the journal showed



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such a "Tendency" to "Mock Religion and bring it into Contempt" and so "profanely abused" the Bible, and so "injuriously reflected on the Reverend and Faithful Ministers of the Gospel and His Majesty's Government," that James Franklin was forbidden to issue the *Courant* or "any Pamphlet or Paper of like Nature, except it be first supervised by the Secretary of this Province" (1723).

James Franklin proposed to evade the order by having his paper printed in Benjamin's name; and, as the latter relates, "to avoid the censure of the Assembly, that might fall on him as still printing it by his apprentices, the contrivance was made that my old indenture should be returned to me, with a full discharge on the back of it, to be shown on occasion, but to secure to him the benefit of my service, I was to sign new indentures for the remainder of the term, which were to be kept private." The *Courant* was issued thus, for several months, in Benjamin Franklin's name. But the older brother had been tyrannical. He was "passionate," says Franklin, and "had often beaten me." And now, "a fresh difference arising," Benjamin asserted his freedom, "presuming," as he says, that James "would not venture to produce the new indentures."

He left his brother's service. In the quarrel that followed, the father sided with James, and to the revolt against the brother was added the latent revolt against the father. Benjamin decided to leave home, but when he tried to get work as a printer in Boston he found that his brother had gone to all the other printers and blacklisted him for breaking his indentures. He knew that he had made himself "a little obnoxious to the governing party" in Massachusetts; he feared that he might be persecuted; he was already

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pointed out with horror by the good people of Boston "as an infidel or atheist." Accordingly, he raised some money by selling the books that he had collected, sent a friend to the captain of a ship that was bound South, with the plea that he (Franklin) had to leave Boston because a young woman there was about to have a child by him, and so obtained passage for New York.

Franklin wrote of his brother: "I fancy his harsh and tyrannical treatment of me might be a means of impressing me with that aversion to arbitrary power that has stuck to me through life"; and this is an excellent example of Franklin's insight into his own subconscious psychology. But Franklin's revolt—and indeed the whole Puritan revolt against tyranny—was more probably the rebellion of repressed instincts against a despotic conscious control, a rebellion that was first transferred to the stern parent and then to authority in church and government. And it is noticeable that the American demand for liberty and equality lessened as Puritanism weakened and parents became more indulgently kind.

By leaving Boston, Franklin not only escaped his brother's tyranny and his father's control; he also got away from the Puritanical life of Boston into a more genial environment in Philadelphia, where he settled down, finally, after failing to find work in New York. He no longer had his brother's example to encourage him in revolt; he had to make his way alone, among strangers, with no relatives to back him. He had lived from childhood in contact with the realities of human nature and adverse circumstance; and though he was bookish, he was no dreamer. His hands had been educated as well as his head; he was not, like Lincoln, averse to the industry of manual labor, but he was equally prepared to use in his career the mental dex-

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terity that had already won him such approbation. He had a solid foundation of confident egotism in his character; yet the inferiority of a younger child in a large family must have prevented his egotism from being overweening. This sense of inferiority seems to have projected itself upon his poverty and his obscurity, and set him in a steady drive of ambition. His ambition, however—like his impulse to revolt—was more and more governed and directed, as time went on, by a canny sense of the opposition against which he must rise; and he devoted himself to outflanking and evading rivals, material obstacles, and public opinion, with a shrewdness that has been condemned as hypocritical.

He early developed one quality of mind that distinguishes him from any of the Americans whom we have been considering. He not only saw human nature in others with eyes as little illuded as Lincoln's or Twain's; he saw it in himself as clearly. He had, in his introspection, a quality of detachment that made it possible for him to regard himself as coolly as if he were looking at himself with another's scrutiny. And indeed he probably was. Out of his young sensitiveness to the opinion of others, he had doubtless acquired the faculty of seeing himself as critically as they did.

For instance, on his first voyage from Boston to New York the sailors caught some cod. Franklin had become a vegetarian at sixteen, but the smell of the fish, hot from the frying-pan, tempted his appetite. He resisted the temptation, convinced that the killing of fish was unprovoked murder because fish could not do man any injury to justify their slaughter. Then he remembered that when the fish were opened he had seen smaller fish in their stomachs. Thought he: "If

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you eat one another, I don't see why we mayn't eat you." Accordingly, he dined on them with a good conscience and continued so to dine. "So convenient a thing it is," he says, "to be a reasonable creature, since it enables one to find or make a reason for everything one has a mind to do."

Similarly, when he was struggling to acquire a sense of order, he found himself opposed by something that "pretended to be reason," which kept suggesting to him that extreme nicety might be "a kind of foppery in morals," that "a perfect character might be attended with the inconvenience of being envied and hated," that "a benevolent man should allow a few faults in himself to keep his friends in countenance." He observed this outwitting of conscience in himself humorously. Such an ability in man "to find or make a reason for everything one has a mind to do" is called, in the new psychology, "rationalization." The subconscious influence is determinative; the conscious reason merely acts as a sort of shyster lawyer to invent court arguments for the subconscious. It was part of Franklin's wisdom as a philosopher that he saw this truth about himself and others; and he derived from that insight much of his ability in political affairs.

He saw also, very early in life, that to win the good will of others, the outward appearance had all the advantage of the inner virtue. The Puritan, who introverted and struggled with his thoughts, became handicapped. Franklin, an extrovert and a realist by the training of his young experience, observed that virtue acted on environment only through visibility, so to speak. Virtue triumphed by acquiring reputation; he set himself to acquire reputation, therefore, and made the Puritan's fight outside of himself, instead of inside, as Paul made it. So, for instance, he writes



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of his early struggles, as a printer and stationer in Philadelphia: "In order to secure my credit and character as a tradesman, I took care not only to be in reality industrious and frugal, but to avoid all appearances to the contrary. I drest plainly; I was seen at no places of idle diversion. I never went out fishing or shooting; a book, indeed, sometimes debauched me from my work, but that was seldom, snug, and gave no scandal; and to show that I was not above my business, I sometimes brought home the paper I purchased at the stores through the streets on a wheelbarrow. Thus being esteemed an industrious, thriving young man, and paying duly for what I bought . . . I went on swimmingly."

In this respect Franklin was the typical small-town Puritan of our day who lives with industrious virtue in the eye of the community and escapes into "moral holidays," as William James calls them, when no one is looking. Franklin had at least two illegitimate children and many amours. He was always a sufferer from gout and fond of his ale and wine. His known benevolence frequently masked a private self-interest. His patience was founded on the experience that his day usually came. And he made such good terms with the religious sensibilities of his neighbors that, as John Adams said: "The Catholics thought him almost a Catholic. The Church of England claimed him as one of them. The Presbyterians thought him half a Presbyterian, and the Friends believed him a wet Quaker."

It took him some years, however, to arrive at such an attitude towards religion. At nineteen, having gone to England to buy types and a printer's outfit, with the backing of a wealthy patron who failed him, he was compelled to work in London as a printer; and there he wrote and printed for himself "a wicked tract"

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in which he argued that, God being all-wise and all-powerful, "whatever is, is right" and "virtue and vice are empty distinctions, no such things existing." His arguments converted some of his companions, but they subsequently swindled him. Observing this result of free thinking, and "recollecting," as he says, the conduct toward him of his patron ("who was another free-thinker") "and my own toward Vernon and Miss Read, which at times gave me great trouble, I began to suspect that this doctrine, though it might be true, was not very useful."

Like most New England Puritans in revolt, Franklin was sufficiently a Yankee to feel that a religion should be "useful." He abated his soul-fear by proposing a useful creed which he felt moved to offer to the world as a new religion:—"That there is one God, who made all things; that He governs the world by his Providence; that He ought to be worshipped by adoration, prayer and thanksgiving; but that the most acceptable service of God is doing good to man; that the soul is immortal; and that God will certainly reward virtue and punish vice, either here or hereafter." In time, the emphasis of his belief fell naturally on his dogma "that the most acceptable service of God is doing good to man." By doing good to man virtue became rewarded, and that reward proved the rightness of the dogma. Here again, instead of striving to make an inner religion, he projected his problem outside himself, and so succeeded where the introverted Puritan failed. Of course, he achieved a morality rather than a religion, but it was a device to placate Providence, and that was all he needed. He ended by asking of any religion only that it should be "productive of good works," and he quarreled with no faith that produced good works.

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In other words, all he asked of any religion was, "Does it work?" And that became his test of any virtue or any ideal. Hear him on the vice of vanity: "Most people dislike vanity in others, whatever share they have of it themselves; but I give it fair quarter wherever I meet with it, being persuaded that it is often productive of good to the possessor, and to others that are within its sphere of action; and therefore, in many cases, it would not be altogether absurd if a man were to thank God for his vanity among the other comforts of life." Vanity having been made a vice by the Puritanic repression of the ego, many persons, he notes, "being forbid to praise themselves, learn instead to censure others, which is only a roundabout way of praising themselves; for condemning the conduct of another, in any particular, amounts to as much as saying, 'I am so honest, or wise, or good, or prudent, that I could not do or approve of such an action.' This fondness for ourselves, rather than malevolence to others, I take to be the general source of censure and backbiting; and I wish men had not been taught to dam up natural currents, to the overflowing and damage of their neighbor's grounds." And therein Franklin was not only a good pragmatist philosopher; he was also of the new school of psychology; for his dictum upon the suppression of the ego impulses, if that dictum be extended to other instincts also, covers the whole modern doctrine of "repression, projection, and reversal of affects."

Applying his pragmatic tests to himself, he found that he was too "disputatious," and, coming upon the Socratic method of argument, "I was charmed with it," he says, "adopted it and dropt my abrupt contradiction and positive argumentation, and put on the humble inquirer and doubter. . . . I found this method safest

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for myself and very embarrassing to those against whom I used it; therefore I took delight in it, practiced it continually, and grew very artful and expert in drawing people, even of superior knowledge, into concessions the consequences of which they did not foresee, entangling them in difficulties out of which they could not extricate themselves, and so obtaining victories that neither myself nor my cause always deserved."

In the same way, his satiric humor—having passed like Lincoln's through a Rabelaisian period—became a mere charm of presentation that served to attract and amuse the reader while the real business of convincing him was proceeding. In a day when there was great affectation in writing, Franklin developed a pretty style of remarkable simplicity and directness, on the pragmatic theory that, as he said, "that is best wrote which is best adapted for obtaining the end of the writer." Having his eye on the reader, rather than on himself, he was neither obscure nor self-consciously affected; he was popular; and in controversy he was more successful even than Swift—whom he resembled—because he had so much more geniality than Swift. Being a Puritan who had been designed for the ministry, naturally, like Emerson, he preached with his pen. Of good writing he declared that "to be good, it ought to have a tendency to benefit the reader, by improving his virtue or his knowledge." But he preached only the practical virtues, those that helped a man to happiness and to material success, for he had the true Yankee respect for prosperity as the evidence of God's favor. "When I travelled in Flanders," he wrote to a Connecticut friend, "I thought of your excessively strict observation of Sunday; and that a man could hardly travel on that day among you upon his



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lawful occasions without hazard of punishment; while, where I was, everyone travelled, if he pleased, or diverted himself in any other way; and in the afternoon both high and low went to the play or the opera, where there was plenty of singing, fiddling and dancing. I looked around for God's judgments, but saw no signs of them. The cities were well built and full of inhabitants, the markets filled with plenty, the people well favored and well clothed, the fields well tilled, the cattle fat and strong, the fences, houses, and windows all in repair, and no Old Tenor (paper money) anywhere in the country; which would almost make one suspect that the Deity is not so angry at that offense as a New England Justice."

Driven by his practical ambition to achieve material success, and seeing prosperity as God's blessing upon virtue, he preached the morality of thrift and industry and sobriety, by which material success is achieved; and he pursued success himself with a shrewd Yankee capacity for taking advantage of any little weaknesses in his rivals. Perhaps the most amusing of his artifices was the means he used to win over an enemy in the General Assembly (1737). He wrote to the man asking for the loan from his library of a very scarce and curious book. He returned the volume in a week, with a grateful note. At their next meeting the man addressed him very civilly and they became friends. And Franklin observes: "This is another instance of the truth of an old maxim I had learned, which says: 'He that hath once done you a kindness will be more ready to do you another than he whom you yourself have obliged.'"

That moral is worthy of being the point of a French farce—which, indeed, it has since become—but consider the shrewdly unsentimental advice which he gives

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in the following letter, written to his relatives when they proposed to sell the house and furnishings of his eldest sister Elizabeth at the age of eighty: "*As having their own way* is one of the greatest comforts of life to old people, I think their friends should endeavor to accommodate them in that, as well as in anything else. When they have long lived in a house, it becomes natural to them; they are almost as closely connected with it as the tortoise with its shell; they die, if you tear them out of it; old folks and old trees, if you remove them, it is ten to one that you kill them; so let our good old sister be no more importuned on that head. We are growing old fast ourselves, and shall expect the same kind of indulgences; if we give them, we shall have a right to receive them in our turn. And as to her few fine things, I think she is in the right not to sell them, and for the reason she gives, that they will fetch but little; when that little is spent, they would be of no further use to her; but perhaps the expectation of possessing them at her death may make that person tender and careful of her, and helpful to her to the amount of ten times their value. If so, they are put to the best use they possibly can be."

Such a benevolent ability to see and work upon the meanest motives of humanity to a good end, without disgust, and without even so much as a superior smile, is a quality in Franklin that has made his name contemptible to many American idealists, but it is a quality that marks the degree of his adjustment to reality in his environment. He saw the unpleasant truth about himself and his fellow man as well as the pleasant truth, with as great a respect for actuality as any modern scientist who ever declared that "facts are clean." It was this ability to face facts that made him a notable inventor, one of the great scientists of

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his age, and one of the most successful diplomats. And it was the quality in him, above all others, that made possible Mirabeau's famous eulogy of him before the National Assembly in Paris: "Antiquity would have raised altars to this mighty genius, who, to the advantage of mankind, compassing in his mind the heavens and the earth, was able to restrain alike thunderbolts and tyrants."

He believed that his chief passion was for science and that his greatest joy came to him from scientific pursuit. But he was typically a Puritan American in his feeling that such pursuits were of value only as they had a practical application. Jefferson wrote of him: "You know the just esteem which attached itself to Dr. Franklin's science; because he always endeavored to direct it to something useful in private life." And Franklin, himself, during the Revolution, when he was longing for leisure to devote to his scientific studies, specifies studies that should "tend to extend the power of man over matter, avert or diminish the evils he is subject to, or augment the number of his enjoyments." Probably the satisfaction that he got from his scientific work came most of all from the public acclaim and from his association with learned men. It is evident from his autobiography that his real impulse both to inventiveness and to scientific inquiry sprang from his desire to be superior; but the proof of his superiority lay always outside of himself in others' approval; the obscurity of his origin, so to speak, could only be illumined by the light in others' faces.

Hence, almost immediately after his return to Philadelphia from his abortive voyage to London, he got his "ingenious acquaintances" together (1728) in a sort of debating society, called the Junto. Its members

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not only discussed books and science; they were requested to report: "Hath any citizen in your knowledge failed in his business lately, and what have you heard of the cause? Have you lately heard of any citizen's thriving well, and by what means? Have you lately heard how any present rich man, here or elsewhere, got his estate? Do you know of a fellow citizen who has lately done a worthy action, deserving praise or imitation; or who has lately committed an error, proper for us to be warned against and avoid? What unhappy effects of intemperance have you lately observed or heard; of imprudence, of passion, or of any other vice or folly?" And significantly: "Has anybody attacked your reputation lately? And what can the Junto do toward securing it?" Franklin, in his Junto, not only obtained a debating platform upon which to practise and exhibit his dialectic skill and his scientific graces; he also supplied himself with a little working model of public opinion to be watched and studied, a news-center of local gossip that gave him material for his newspaper when he began to publish it, and a sort of fraternal lodge to aid and support him in his rise in the world. It was to the Junto that he first presented his idea of a city watch, from which the police force developed; and here he first outlined his plans for fire prevention, out of which grew the first volunteer fire company. The club finally became "The American Philosophical Society" and, with Franklin as its president, took "rank among the learned bodies of Europe."

Under all these practical and scientific aspects of his mind, there was still a Puritan drive of soul-fear. It shows in his public confession of those moral errata which his autobiography acknowledges, and in the reparation which he made. It is equally evident in



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his amusing attempt to attain "moral perfection," during his early Junto days. He formulated thirteen virtuous precepts for himself—thirteen rules of conduct, which, he felt, would make him a perfectly moral man if he could follow them. He gave to each of the thirteen rules a week of application, fortifying himself with prayer, and noting in his diary his success or his failure. The thirteen weeks constituted "a course," and he took four courses a year. "After a while," he says, "I went through one course only in a year, and afterward only one in several years, till at length I omitted them entirely, being employed in voyages and business abroad, with a multiplicity of affairs that interfered. Tho' I never arrived at the perfection I had been so ambitious of obtaining, but fell far short of it, yet I was, by the endeavor, a better and a happier man than I otherwise should have been. It may be well my posterity should be informed that to this little artifice, with the blessing of God, their ancestor owed the constant felicity of his life." That is to say, he derived, from the wish to be good, a happiness that did not depend upon the actual success of his effort. He split himself, in fact, into the desired idealism of the Puritan in his aim and the practical realism of the Yankee in his performance—although, to be sure, in his rule of chastity, he hardly rose to the Puritan ideal: "Chastity. Rarely use venery but for health or offspring, never to dulness, weakness, or the injury of your own or another's peace or reputation."

Throughout his life, indeed, his incontinence was well known, and it was often used against him in political campaigns. At the age of twenty-four he married the Miss Read to whom he had been engaged before his first voyage to England—the Miss Read of whom he wrote that his conduct toward her gave him

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“great trouble” of mind because he had broken his engagement to her while in England. But his marital affection was a very sober and practical sort of sentiment; he did not take his wife abroad with him on his long missions either to England or to France; and in writing of her the quality which he most often commended was her frugality.

It was inevitable that he should enter public life and succeed conspicuously. He was made clerk of the General Assembly in 1736 at the age of thirty. “Besides the pay for the immediate service as clerk,” he says, “the place gave me a better opportunity of keeping up an interest among the members, which secured to me the business of printing the votes, laws, paper money, and occasional jobs for the public, that, on the whole were very profitable.” A year later, he became Deputy Postmaster General at Philadelphia, and he “found it of great advantage, for, tho’ the salary was small, it facilitated the correspondence that improved my newspaper, increased the number demanded as well as the advertisements to be inserted, so that it came to afford me a considerable income.” These private profits of public office are what the modern American politician calls “honest graft.” They mark a difference between Franklin and Lincoln. But with Franklin’s promotion to more important offices, he identified himself more and more completely with his people, and there is no suspicion of personal profit in his final years of work in London and Paris on behalf of the Colonies.

He went to London in 1757 as the representative of the people of the Province of Pennsylvania in their quarrel with the proprietary family of the Penns, who held Pennsylvania as a sort of fief by charter from the crown. He had already distinguished himself as

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a champion of the popular cause, in Philadelphia, both as a politician and as a pamphleteer; and he was known in England as the famous scientist who had proved, among other things, that lightning was a discharge of electricity. He entered upon his mission, therefore, with the confidence of his clients and the respect of the tribunal before which he had come to plead, and he went to work with the greatest patience, astuteness, and amiability. When Pennsylvania's revolt against the Penns merged into the greater revolt of the Colonies against the British Parliament, he became the agent also for New Jersey, Georgia, and Massachusetts, and for eighteen years, from 1757 to 1775—with one visit home of two years, 1762-64—he was engaged in diplomatically defending the Colonists and trying to prevent the final breach that might bring on war.

He failed, of course, and he all but destroyed himself in the effort. He had no feeling against the British; he had, indeed, a real affection for them; and he entered upon a friendly intercourse with the learned and the literary, the politicians and the aristocracy, with flattering social success for himself and considerable benefit in back-stairs influence for his clients. This was a form of diplomacy, however, in which Westminster was more experienced than he. In 1762 his illegitimate son, William Franklin, was made governor of New Jersey by the crown; and when the Stamp Act was passed by the British Parliament (1765), the Prime Minister, assuring Franklin that he desired "to make the execution of the Act as little inconvenient and disagreeable to America as possible" and to that end preferred to nominate as stamp distributors "discreet and reputable" residents in the province, asked Franklin to nominate some "honest and responsible" man in Philadelphia. Franklin nom-

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inated an acquaintance named Hughes. As a result, the Philadelphians, in their rage, all but burned down Franklin's house, and for the moment he was as unpopular as any traitor in America.

He saved himself by getting into line with colonial opinion swiftly and conspicuously. Summoned before the bar of the House of Commons, early in 1766, to give testimony concerning the Colonies and the enforcement of the Stamp Act, he defended the Colonial revolt in a manner and with a success that moved Edmund Burke to compare the proceedings to the examination of a schoolmaster by a parcel of schoolboys. And thereafter, he was never out of step with public sentiment in America, though he hoped to the last that war might be avoided. When he heard that some of the more offensive measures taken by the British government in Massachusetts had been advised in letters from Governor Hutchinson, he was so eager to relieve the British of the blame that he obtained the letters and forwarded them to friends in Boston, who published them in a campaign against Hutchinson. For this, in 1774, Franklin was called before a committee of the House of Lords, on the hearing of a petition to remove Hutchinson; he was viciously attacked by counsel as a thief who had stolen private letters, and branded by the Lords' report as having "surreptitiously" obtained them. The hearing was attended by thirty-five privy councilors and "an immense crowd" of courtiers who had been flatteringly friendly to Franklin and who did not conceal their pleasure in the abuse that was now heaped on him. It ended his usefulness in England. He returned to Philadelphia in 1775, to take his famous part in drawing up the Declaration of Independence and to help to lead the forces of revolution.



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In the autumn of 1776 he was sent as envoy to Paris, and there the peculiar traits of his temperament made him so successful in dealing with the French that he may be credited with having obtained, single-handed, the French assistance that was so valuable to the American cause. Amid the insane egotism of some of his assistants, he merited again Burke's description of him as a master among schoolboys. He was so able in handling the delicate and dangerous problems of his mission that the historian of American diplomacy has declared him the one true diplomat America has ever produced. He procured from the French, for the American government, immense loans of such importance to the Colonists that it has been said of him, "he had to keep the country from financial failure as Washington had to keep it from military failure; he was the real financier of the Revolution." Undermined in America by the same cabal that tried to unseat Washington, and attacked secretly by his jealous associates in Paris, he passed through an endless campaign of vilification without writing an impatient word in reply. Though he was past seventy years of age, he did an incredible amount of work efficiently and without strain, carried on an exhausting social intercourse with the liberal French aristocrats whose support was so valuable to American ideals, and indulged his leisure in numerous sentimental affairs with the blue-stockings of Paris, to the horror of some of the good Puritan wives of his confrères.

In 1778 he signed the treaty of alliance with France that assured American independence. In 1782 he helped to negotiate the treaty of peace with Great Britain. In 1785, nearly eighty years of age, he said good-by to his friends in Europe, and returned home "to go to bed." He was not allowed to retire, how-

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ever. His countrymen, he said, "have eaten my flesh and seem resolved now to pick my bones." He served in the convention that drew up the Constitution of the United States, and for three years he was president of Pennsylvania. At last, in 1788, he got to bed, and proceeded to die there serenely. Of newspaper attacks upon him he said: "I have long been accustomed to receive more blame, as well as more praise, than I have deserved. It is the lot of every public man, and I leave one account to balance the other." His last literary effort was a humorous reply to a pro-slavery speech in Congress (March 23, 1790), and his last public act the signing of a memorial to Congress from the Abolition Society of which he was president. His last words were humorous; being short of breath, he was advised to change his position in bed so that he might breathe more easily, and he retorted, "A dying man can do nothing easy." Soon afterward he became unconscious and died, April 17, 1790, at the age of eighty-four.

He had lived, he wrote, "with a considerable degree of felicity," and "that felicity, when I reflected on it, has induced me sometimes to say that, were it offered to my choice, I should have no objection to a repetition of the same life from the beginning." Thus he was that strange exception, a happy Puritan. He successfully applied the Puritan anxiety of soul not only to the problem of material success, but to the other problems of his relation with his environment. He was like Lincoln in many ways—and especially so in his exact intellectual reflection of the facts of human nature and in his rise from obscurity to fame by the use of mental dexterity—but, unlike Lincoln, he gained happiness and valued it as his supreme success. Unlike Lincoln, too, he fortified against inferiority by

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transferring power into terms of property. Unlike Twain, he gained a fame which seemed to him founded on true values, and he lived to enjoy that fame expressed in others' respect and praise. He used his talents to win affection and to satisfy affection; so that he succeeded in acquiring equally the three necessities of social life, property, affection, and fame. Finally, he easily identified himself with the herd and escaped Mark Twain's disaster; and by making the voice of the people the voice of God, and the service of man the service of God, he avoided the introversion that lay in Emerson's belief that God was within him.

The incomparable fullness of his life came from a freedom of thought and an ease in action that were both based on his accepting as worthy impulses many subconscious and instinctive tendencies that are commonly repressed as ignoble. He saw them as natural; he admitted them into his consideration cheerfully; he used them without religious prejudice, in every sort of contact with his environment. Consequently, he is, above all others, the American who best faced reality and with a serene judgment of his own values applied that judgment to the adjustment of himself to life, permitting himself no illusions about himself nor about the resistances common in human nature, and allowing no idealistic concepts to interfere with the application of serviceable expediences in bending reality to his purpose.

## VIII. *In Henry W. Longfellow*

LONGFELLOW was a Puritan, but a more or less liberated Puritan. He was freed in his childhood by that release of educated New-Englanders which began with Unitarianism and ran spiritually wild in transcendentalism. His father, Stephen Longfellow, a lawyer of Portland, Maine, had been a classmate of Rev. W. E. Channing at Harvard, and he followed Channing for some respectable distance out of orthodoxy. The poet was born in 1807, and in 1809 Channing could write of Puritanism: "A man of plain sense, whose spirit has not been broken to this creed by education or terror, will think it is not necessary for us to travel to heathen countries to learn how mournfully the human mind may misrepresent the Deity." He taught that "human nature, made in the image of God, is not totally depraved." He proclaimed God a kindly Omnipotence whom the Puritans had libeled with their doctrines of original sin and eternal punishment.

His dogmas, obviously inspired by the need of escaping psychic anxiety, were eagerly accepted by the intellectual classes in New England who were most suffering from soul-fear. Harvard College was the center of the emancipation; it spread with the rapidity of a mob movement, and most of the Boston churches quickly changed faith. It was, of course, a mild sort of high-brow revolt that did not affect Puritan standards of conduct and morality; but where the old



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religion had tabooed art, music, literature, and the love of beauty as somehow sinful, the new religion sanctified them as helping to expand the soul and to make it more worth saving. Stephen Longfellow's son, Henry Wadsworth, consequently received from his father the permission to indulge himself in a certain amount of innocent earthly happiness, unreprieved, and to respond if he wished to the appeal of beauty so long as it was a Puritanically intellectualized and not too earthly beauty.

His mother bettered the permission. "She was fond of poetry and music," her son Samuel wrote of her, "and in her youth of dancing and social gayety." She communicated to her famous child her love of poetry, of course, and something of her love of music, for he learned to play—the flute. She did not, however, communicate to him any gay passion for the dance, for he has described himself as a young man, going to a ball "for the purpose of dancing with elderly ladies," who are, he thinks, "much more grateful for slight attentions than younger ones."

His mother was "a lover of nature in all its aspects," Samuel Longfellow goes on to say, and by this he means, apparently, that she even admired thunderstorms; she would sit by a window during a storm, "enjoying the excitement of its splendors." When the poet was eight months old, she wrote of a visit to the country: "The retirement pleases me; and the stillness of the scene—when, after rambling miles without meeting anyone, we seat ourselves by the side of the river, which we find unruffled by a breath of air—has a wonderful effect in tranquillizing the spirit and calming every unpleasant emotion." She communicated to her son Henry this love of nature, but it was the invidious sort of love that feels "God made the coun-

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try, but man made the town." The "retirement" was the thing that pleased her, "after rambling miles without meeting anyone." Her emotion—a romantic emotion—came of a sense of escape from the unideal realities of human contact. It became Longfellow's emotion. It has become a common American emotion. It has made landscape painting America's chief school of art, "nature poetry" its most select verse, the essays of "nature lovers" one of its favorite shelves of *belles-lettres*, and "the picturesque" its great æsthetic passion.

She communicated to him another romantic emotion. She had named him Henry Wadsworth after her favorite brother, a young lieutenant in the American navy who, with his companions, had perished voluntarily when they blew up their ship, the *Intrepid*, before the walls of Tripoli in 1804. Her father was General Peleg Wadsworth, who had fought in the War of Independence, and her children "never tired of hearing him tell the thrilling story of his capture by British soldiers, his imprisonment in Fort George, and his adventurous escape." The poet's first letter to his father ended, "I wish you to buy me a drum." At the age of five, on the eve of the invasion of Canada, in 1812, an aunt wrote of him: "Our little Henry is ready to march; he had his tin gun prepared and his head powdered a week ago." His first published verses, printed in the *Portland Gazette* when he was thirteen, celebrated the battle of Lovell's Pond, in terms of the emotion aroused in him by his mother's sentiment toward her dead brother. The last verse ran:

"They died in their glory, surrounded by fame,  
And Victory's loud trump their death did proclaim;  
They are dead; but they live in each patriot's breast,  
And their names are engraven on honor's bright crest."

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And even when he was a Freshman at Bowdoin College he wrote in a letter of his regret that he had not gone rather to West Point.

Reared in the tradition of martial romance by his mother, he came to adolescence with guiding ideals of fame and honor and patriotic service—unusual ideals for a Puritan. He sought unconsciously to yoke those ideals to his mother's love of poetry, and to attain fame and honor by writing patriotic verse. And it is curious to see how he combined also his mother's love of nature with a patriotic emotion and with the pursuit of fame as a poet, in the brief address, "Our Native Writers," which he delivered as his Commencement oration on his graduation day.

He begins by being thrilled with the very sound of his title, "Our Native Writers." He feels patriotic and he feels that the words "foretell that whatever is noble and attractive in our national character will one day be associated with the sweet magic of Poetry." Will poetry "breathe over" his native land "that enchantment which lives in the isles of Greece"? "Yes!" he cries, "and palms are to be won by our native writers!" As yet they have not been able to throw off a "literary allegiance to Old England," and the American people, with "an aversion to everything that is not practical, operative, and thoroughgoing," have not patronized native writers. Those writers must be patronized. The English, in their "vanity of scholarship," have reproached America for having "no finished scholars." But it is not "men of mere learning" who "give to a nation its great name"; and the very lack of scholarship will save the native writers from imitateness and give American literature "a national character." In that endeavor after "literary prosperity" there is one thing, he finds, "from which

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we may hope a happy and glorious issue: it is the influence of natural scenery in forming the poetical character. . . . Men may talk of sitting down in the calm and quiet of their libraries, and of forgetting, in the eloquent companionship of books, all the vain cares that beset them in the crowded thoroughfares of life; but, after all, there is nothing which so frees us from the turbulent ambition and bustle of the world, nothing which so fills the mind with great and glowing conceptions, and at the same time so warms the heart with love and tenderness as a frequent and close communion with natural scenery. . . . Our poetry is not in books alone. It is in the hearts of those men whose love for the world's gain—for its business and its holiday—has grown cold within them, and who have gone into the retirements of nature, and have found there that sweet sentiment and pure devotion of feeling can spring up and live in the shadows of a quiet life and amid those that have no splendor in their joys and no parade in their griefs. . . . We may rejoice, then, in the hope of beauty and sublimity in our national literature, for no people are richer than we are in the treasures of nature."

This is a very different emotion from Emerson's fear of the herd. It is a patriotic emotion grafted upon his mother's love of "retirement." Longfellow had not been, like Emerson, secluded in his boyhood; he had lived the normal life of an American schoolboy, "fond of all boys' games—ball, kite-flying, and swimming in summer; in winter, snowbattling, coasting, skating." A schoolmate records of him: "He had no relish for rude sports, but loved to bathe in a little creek on the border of Deering's Oaks, and would roam through the woods at times with a gun, but this was mostly under the influence of others. He loved much better to lie



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under a tree and read." His vacations were partly spent on his grandfather's country estate, and with his cousins he followed the mowers, went after the cows, picked wild strawberries, and watched the butter-making and corn-husking. Hence in his panegyric on the poetical beauties of the "retirements of nature" he includes the quiet life of "those that have no splendor in their joys and no parade in their griefs." Fame was the dominant urge of his childish ego, and the love of beauty a sort of pleasure trend. But he had not enough Puritanic soul-fear to drive him to anxious achievement; and he had no unconscious sense of inferiority among his fellows to make him morbidly temperamental. He was not rightly a nature poet, but the poet of innocent and virtuous humanity; and, indeed, he was not temperamentally a poet at all, but a studious boy, of a patriotic ambition, who sought fame as a poet because of his mother's influence.

She gave him also a kindly and tolerant God. "Full of a tender, simple, unquestioning piety, she was a lover of church and sermon and hymn." On Sundays, there was church-going twice a day, Henry carrying his mother's foot-warmer in winter and a bunch of flowers in summer; and "after the meeting, the mother gathered her children around her, to read in turn from the great family Bible." He wrote of religion, at seventeen: "I conceive that if religion is ever to benefit us it must be incorporated with our feelings and become in every degree identified with our happiness. And hence I love that view of Christianity which sets it in the light of a cheerful, kind-hearted friend, and which gives its thoughts a noble and liberal form." And at twenty-three: "It is this religious feeling—this changing of the finite for the infinite, this constant grasping after the invisible things of another and higher world

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—which marks the spirit of modern literature. . . . To the modern poet the world beyond the grave presents itself with all the force of a reality and yet with all the mystery of a dream. It is a glorious certainty to some, an appalling certainty to others. Thitherward the confiding spirit turns as to 'the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.' ” And such a mild feeling of contented certainty about religion seems never to have left him. Confident of a life after death, and assured that in eternity he should meet with the judgment of a “cheerful, kind-hearted friend,” he faced the moral problems of life and the fear of death with a placid courage that never sank lower than melancholy.

He lived through the happy childhood of a normal American boy and came to his adolescence animated by that devotion to his mother which made her image in his subconscious mind a sort of guardian angel to his conduct. “You were always an admirer of the sex,” a classmate wrote to him, “but they seemed to you something enshrined and holy—to be gazed at and talked with and nothing further.” And his brother Samuel adds: “This chivalrous feeling towards women was all his life characteristic of him. . . . It was this tone of feeling which made him in later years to have less sympathy with the movements for women’s enfranchisement from homage and privilege to equal standing with men.” When he was six, his school-teacher gave testimony: “Master Henry Longfellow is one of the best boys we have in school. . . . His conduct last quarter was very correct and amiable.” A classmate at Bowdoin described him: “He was an agreeable companion, kindly and social in his manner, rendering himself dear to his associates by his disposition and deportment. Pure in his tastes and morals, his character was without a stain.” And in this he was

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also the son of his father, of whom Channing wrote: "I never knew a man more free from everything offensive to good taste or good feeling; even to his dress and personal appearance, all about him was attractive. . . . He seemed to breathe an atmosphere of purity as his natural element."

Longfellow came through his adolescence, conventional, unemotional, not very sensitively æsthetic, and ambitious to write, but with nothing much to say and only the desire of fame to make him say it. He wrote verse that was an imitation of Bryant's and prose that was the double of Irving's. During his seventeenth year (1824-25) seventeen of his poems were published, from time to time, in a semimonthly Boston periodical, the *United States Literary Gazette*, and the editor wrote to him: "Almost all the poetry we print is sent to us gratis . . . but the beauty of your poetry makes me wish to obtain your regular aid. . . . For the prose we publish we pay one dollar a column." He later assured Longfellow: "I am equally satisfied that your literary talents are of no ordinary character, and that they have not received their highest culture." And again, of another contribution: "It has convinced me most decidedly of the vigor and originality of your mind. At your age it is remarkable."

In spite of this friendly praise, the verses remain neither vigorous nor original. They are mostly boyish descriptions of natural scenery, gently fluted wood notes, in Bryant's manner. Longfellow collected only six of them in his published works. "When I look back upon my early years," he once wrote Bryant, "I cannot but smile to see how much in them is really yours. It was an involuntary imitation, which I most readily confess." But if the manner was due to

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Bryant's influence the matter was his mother's. He is still tranquilly "retiring" to nature. As, for instance:

"If thou art worn and hard beset,  
With sorrows that thou wouldst forget,  
If thou wouldst read a lesson that will keep  
Thy heart from fainting and thy soul from sleep,  
Go to the woods and hills!"

And that his mother was in some degree responsible for the manner of his verse, too, is evident from a letter that she wrote him, when he was a Sophomore at Bowdoin. He had spoken of obscurity as contributing to sublimity. She replied: "It may be so, but I am much better pleased with those pieces which touch the feelings and improve the heart than those which excite the imagination only and raise an indistinct admiration."

He transferred some of his poetic feeling for natural scenery to the original inhabitants of Maine, the Indians. After reading a history of them, in 1823, he wrote his mother that he was convinced "they are a race possessing magnanimity, generosity, benevolence, and pure religion without hypocrisy." In this mood, he wrote his poem, "The Burial of the Minnisink," a description of the funeral of an Indian chief amid his "native bowers," while "a dark-haired virgin train" chanted "a funeral hymn." He was probably aware how much of this was make-believe. In a prose article of the period, he wrote: "No poet paints critically from nature; but the ideal world of poetry is not only peopled with its own children, but is shadowed and beautified with its own woods and waters." Nevertheless, he carried his boyish sentiment about the Indians into a much later poem, "Hiawatha," where the make-believe is by no means so obvious.



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His success with his contributions to the *United States Literary Gazette* confirmed him in his ambition to gain fame as an author. In March, 1824, he had written from college to his father, with a dutiful timidity: "I am curious to know what you intend to make of me—whether I am to study a profession or not; and, if so, what profession. I hope your ideas upon the subject will agree with mine, for I have a particular and strong prejudice for one course of life, to which you, I fear, will not agree. It will not be worth while to mention what this is until I become personally acquainted with your wishes." His father apparently did not reply; some of his success with the *Literary Gazette* intervened; and in December, 1824, he wrote that he wished to go to Cambridge for a year, read history and "polite literature," and then find a position with "some literary periodical publication, by which I could maintain myself and still enjoy the advantage of reading." And he added, with a stammering boldness: "The fact is—and I will not disguise it in the least, for I think I ought not—the fact is, I most eagerly aspire after future eminence in literature; my whole soul burns most ardently for it, and every earthly thought centers on it. . . . I am almost confident in believing that, if I can ever rise in the world, it must be by the exercise of my talent in the wide field of literature. With such a belief, I must say that I am unwilling to engage in the study of law." Receiving no answer, he wrote again a few weeks later: "Let me reside one year at Cambridge; let me study *belles-lettres*, and after that time"—if he failed to show promise—"there is still time enough left for the study of a profession."

When, as an infant, he wrote his father, "I wish you to buy me a drum," his father replied: "I have found

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a very pretty drum, with an eagle painted on it, but the man asks two dollars for it." The elder Longfellow made the same reply now—that the literary drum was pretty, but too expensive. "A literary life," he said, "to one who has the means of support, must be very pleasant. But there is not wealth enough in this country to afford encouragement and patronage to merely literary men. And as you have not had the fortune (I will not say whether good or ill) to be born rich, you must adopt a profession which will afford you subsistence as well as reputation. I am happy to observe that my ambition has never been to accumulate wealth for my children, but to cultivate their minds in the best possible manner, and to imbue them with correct moral, political, and religious principles—believing that a person thus educated will with proper diligence be certain of attaining all the wealth which is necessary to happiness. With regard to your spending a year at Cambridge, I have always thought it beneficial; and if my health should not be impaired and my finances should allow, I should be very happy to gratify you." He adds that he had noticed, in a newspaper, "some poetry from the *U. S. Literary Gazette*, which, from the signature, I presume to be from your pen. It is a very pretty production and I read it with pleasure. But you will observe that the second line of the sixth verse has too many feet. 'Beneath the dark and motionless beech.' I think it would be improved by substituting *lonely* for *motionless*. I suggest this for your consideration."

The chastened poet hastened to reply that since it seemed to be his father's "fixed desire" to make him a lawyer, he was willing to be a lawyer—after a year at Cambridge—but nothing could ever induce him "to relinquish the pleasures of literature." Law, he said,

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"will support my real existence, literature an *ideal* one." And after his graduation he became a law student in his father's office.

He was saved from the law by his literary reputation. Bowdoin College had decided to establish a chair of modern languages, and he was offered an instructorship in that department, with the stipulation that he should first go abroad for three years, on a small allowance, and study the languages which he must teach. He accepted; and from May, 1826, until August, 1829—from the age of nineteen to twenty-two—he studied and traveled in France, Spain, Italy, Germany, and England.

They were the studies and travels of a typically well-behaved New England young man of the period. His mother was worried about the effect of Paris on him: "It is true, Henry, your parents have great confidence in your uprightness, and in that purity of mind which will instantly take alarm on coming in contact with anything vicious or unworthy. *We* have confidence; but *you* must be careful and watchful." Their confidence was justified. Paris could not tempt him. Even ten years later, discovering a Parisian friend in a liaison, he commented: "Janin thought it a fine joke, but I see no beauty or decency in such an irregular life, although he had many a laugh at what he called my Puritanical innocence." One of his biographers observes that "even the Louvre, with its boundless wealth of ancient and modern art, was dismissed" (in his letters) "with this irritatingly raw remark: 'In the Louvre there is a painting of Venus which is an exact portrait of Miss K——'" If he saw a wedding procession of French villagers, he reflected: "How happy were they who were thus to dwell together in the peaceful bosom of their native village,

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far from the gilded misery and pestilential vices of the town." When the bridal procession was followed, hours later by a funeral: "A melancholy train of thought forced itself home upon my mind. The joys and sorrows of this world are so strikingly mingled . . . and all is unstable, uncertain, and transitory." Sitting in the garden of a Roman villa, enjoying the view, he muses: "Oh, did we but know when we are happy! Could the restless, feverish, ambitious heart be still, but for a moment, and yield itself, without one further-aspiring throb, to its enjoyment—then were I happy—yea, thrice happy! But, no . . . as if time were not swift enough, swifter thoughts outstrip his rapid flight, and onward, onward do they wing their way to the distant mountains, to the fleeting clouds of the future; and yet I know that erelong, weary and wayworn and disappointed, they shall return to nestle in the bosom of the past!"

Longfellow, in fact, was one of the first Americans to make his escape from the realities of life at home into the picturesque and romantic appearances of Europe; and he was the first of American writers, after Irving, to report these picturesque and romantic aspects of the grand tour, to American readers, picturesquely and romantically and with a pretty Puritan melancholy in verse and prose.

Just before his return, he wrote of himself: "My poetic career is finished. Since I left America I have hardly put two lines together." And, after his return: "I have long ceased to attach any kind of value to them" (his poems) "and, indeed, to think of them. Since my return I have written one piece of poetry, but have not published a line. You need not be alarmed on that score. I am all prudence, now, since I can form a more accurate judgment of the merit of poetry.



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If I ever publish a volume, it will be many years first. . . . Indeed, I have such an engrossing interest in the studies of my profession that I write very seldom except in connection with those studies."

The impulse to seek fame as a poet was temporarily submerged by the necessity of earning a living, but it worked deviously under his apparent surrender of it. He studied foreign languages; he translated into English verse; he assured himself, "One must write and write correctly in order to teach." He tried to do for the Continent what Irving had done for England, and composed a series of travel sketches, "Outre-Mer," in an exact imitation of Irving. He prepared text-books for the use of his students and wrote magazine articles on foreign literatures. In all this, he evidently felt that he was patriotically helping to bring the culture of Europe to young America, as well as preparing himself, like Milton, for his maturest poetical endeavor. And both his patriotic and his poetical ambition found expression in a magazine article, "The Defence of Poetry," which he published in the *North American Review*, January, 1832.

It is merely a less boyish expression of the same sentiments that had inspired him in "Our Native Writers." "With us, the spirit of the age is clamorous for utility—for visible, tangible utility—for bare, brawny muscular utility." Yet "the true glory of a nation is moral and intellectual pre-eminence." "A thousand little rills, springing up in the retired walks of life, go to swell the tide of national glory and prosperity; and whoever in the solitude of his chamber, and by even a single effort of his mind, has added to the intellectual pre-eminence of his country, has not lived in vain, nor to himself alone." He pleads for poetry not only for its own sake, but for the way in which it combines

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itself with the history of the nation and expresses the national spirit. He calls on the American poet to be more original "and withal more national." In order to be more national, "they have only to write more nationally, to write from their own feelings and impressions, from the influence of what they see around them," particularly "in descriptions of natural scenery." And finally, he seems to voice his own ambition: "We hope that ere long some one of our most gifted bards will throw his fetters off, and, relying on himself alone, fathom the recesses of his own mind and bring up rich pearls from the secret depths of thought."

He was successful and he was happy. Busy with his profession, earning an easy living, healthy, popular, and handsome, he came to young manhood, a typically normal New England American of culture and intelligence. He had behind him a normal, happy childhood and a normal, happy adolescence; now he fell in love with a Portland girl, a former schoolmate, who was of his mother's type of cultivated Puritan; they were married in September, 1831, when she was nineteen and he was twenty-four; and Longfellow added, to his other happy successes, four years of an ideally happy married life before his wife died, in consequence of the premature birth of a child, in November, 1835.

Her death devastated him. His egoistic ideal of fame, the guiding fiction of his young life, was no defense in this sudden confrontation with an inescapable reality. His sorrow was overwhelming; it put upon every memory a wistfulness of regret that never afterwards left him; and for a time he wavered on the brink of melancholia. His past saved him. During his twenty-eight years of success and happiness he had been educated to respond normally to the common stimuli of life, and, in spite of the momentary shock, he continued

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to respond. He had learned idealistically to see God as a loving friend and to look to immortality as a haven; he made that teaching, now, true in fact. He had acquired habits of work, and he continued his work determinedly. His ego motive, the pursuit of fame, was transmuted into an ideal of service to humanity. He wrote to a friend: "I feel at this moment more than ever that fame must be looked upon only as an accessory. . . . You have a higher and nobler motive of action within you, believe me; look into your own heart and you will find the motive there. . . . It is the love of what is intellectual and beautiful . . . and then, the speaking of the truth in what you write and thereby exercising a good influence on those about you, bringing them, as far as you may, to feel a sympathy with all that 'is lovely and of good report.' "

This transmutation was his first victory in a struggle between the pleasure principle and the reality principle of his life. The final triumph of his faltering ego was announced in his poem, "A Psalm of Life"—the pæan of an ego facing reality courageously, disdaining the pleasure motive, and turning its back on the path of psychotic regression. It is a profoundly important psychological poem. It said what the modern psychology repeats to-day, that the conquest of reality is the supreme test of fitness of character. Its truth was at once evident in the universality of its appeal and in its effect on the youth of its time whom it "wakened to a new sense of the meaning and worth of life." It was a poem from the depth of Longfellow's subconscious mind, written without effort, as if the lines were spoken to him. And it was his real beginning as an authentic poet.

For twenty-eight years, throughout his childhood, youth, and adolescence, he had been living the common

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emotional experiences of the normal American. He began now to receive, into a wistful poetical memory, the scenes and emotions of that past and to express them in placid, mildly melancholy verses that were as serenely beautiful as if he were playing them on a flute. The repressed emotion of grief had reinspired his poetic energy; and whether he wrote of the happiness of childhood or boyhood, of courtship or marriage, that grief gave all a sad cadence. "Excelsior," which was popularly interpreted as the call to a high ideal, was psychologically his unconscious reflection upon the price which his own spirit had paid for the pursuit of fame. "Hiawatha" is unconsciously symbolic of the struggle of the soul with its enemies and its victory over reality by service and action and self-sacrifice; the emotions, sentiments, and experiences of his hero are those of his own Puritan ego; the Indian legend and the primitive style of the verse only cloak a history of his own psyche. So "Evangeline" is the long search of his ego for its lost love, in heaven. The ideal of life which he expressed in these poems was real, because he had himself lived it. The poems made a deep appeal to the unconscious emotions of his readers because his own instinctive reactions were so close to the common human experiences of his kind. The clearness and simplicity of his verse carried his appeal to the largest audience that any poet reached in his day.

Margaret Fuller, who herself had had very little of health, success, happiness, or love, wrote a contemporary disparagement of Longfellow that has ever since been indorsed by the purely intellectual critic: "When we see a person of moderate powers, receive honors which should be reserved for the highest, we feel somewhat like assailing him and taking from him the crown which should be reserved for grander brows. . . . He



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has no style of his own growing out of his own experiences and observations of nature. . . . This want of the free breath of nature, this perpetual borrowing of imagery, this excessive, because superficial, culture, which he has derived from an acquaintance with the elegant literature of many nations and men, is out of all proportion to the experience of life within himself . . . and prevents Mr. Longfellow's verses from ever being a true refreshment to ourselves." And from the purely artistic point of view, of course, he was never more than a second-rate poet. But an English critic well expressed the secret of his fame: "He is the familiar friend, who has sung to every household and set to music their aspirations and their affections. He is the poet of our sober English nature, with its deep undercurrent of earnestness and enthusiasm, yet with its dislike of extravagance and its joy in the tender relations of life. He shows us the poetic side of ordinary events." And Walt Whitman, so antipathetic to Longfellow in his ideals and his art, saw Longfellow's value when he wrote: "He is certainly the sort of bard and counteractant most needed for our materialistic, self-assertive, money-worshipping, Anglo-Saxon races, and especially for the present age in America—an age tyrannically regulated with reference to the manufacturer, the merchant, the financier, the politician, and the day workman—for whom and among whom he comes as the poet of melody, courtesy, deference—the poet of the mellow twilight of the past in Italy, Germany, Spain, and in northern Europe—poet of all sympathetic gentleness—and universal poet of women and young people. I should have to think long if I were asked to name the man who has done more, and in more valuable directions, for America."

Here it would seem that Whitman hit upon a deeply

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hidden truth about Longfellow. Man is by nature a herd animal, social, gregarious, and co-operative. Scarcity of food and the things that mean food—money, goods, land, and so forth—have made him competitive; but where food is plentiful he becomes co-operative and kindly; and even when scarcity makes him most competitive, his herd instinct fills his unconscious mind with trends that remain as obscure longings, though they may be repressed and prevented from showing in his actions. The strongest of these longings is for “the love of his neighbor,” and the frustration of that wish for the love of one’s neighbors produces more human failure in our competitive day than any other one psychological cause.

Longfellow came to write at a time when the Anglo-Saxon races, in the development of the era of machine industry, were beginning to feel keenly the pressure of individual competition and the loss of the kindlier gregariousness of a more primitive way of life. The unconscious mind of the American, put upon the defensive by this pressure—the pressure of what Whitman called “our materialistic, self-assertive, money-worshipping age”—still longed for the satisfaction of his herd instinct in the love of his neighbors, although the longing could escape only in pretense and make-believe and self-deception. Longfellow, as the poet of “courtesy and deference and all sympathetic gentleness,” released that longing. The hero of his poems, his own projected ego, was a racial hero, tracing back to Beowulf—a hero, devoted to the herd, gentle with the love of beauty but fortified by ideals of courage and honor and faith in God and trust in immortality. By giving this hero to his readers—in *Hiawatha*, for example—he helped immeasurably to ameliorate the friction of Puritanically competitive American life. In

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his more clearly personal poems, he told others whatever had helped himself—the value and beauty of romantic courtship and conjugal happiness, the homely virtue of facing the present with courage and patience, of having high aims and trying to live up to them, of making herd ideals the road to happiness. In those aspects of his teaching and his example, it would be difficult, as Whitman said, “to name the man who has done more for America.”

This is a summary, however, of his full achievement, and no such successful fruition of his temperament followed immediately upon his struggle against the melancholia that threatened him after the death of his wife. Eight years intervened, from 1835 to 1843, before he arrived at sufficient subconscious contentment to give out his best work. His journal, during that period, is full of his unhappiness: “I am lonely. . . . I am prodigiously low spirited. . . . I want action . . . I am too excited, too tumultuous inwardly. And my health suffers from all this. . . . Dejected, no sunshine in my soul. . . . Live in the present—I find no other way of keeping my nerves quiet than this—namely, to do with all my might whatever I have to do, without thinking of the future, in which most people live. . . . Activity, constant, ceaseless activity—this is what I need. . . . I have never felt such a total want of interest in everything.” What really ailed him is sufficiently indicated in a letter which he wrote to a friend: “And now rises up before me a picture of heaven upon earth, which I met with a few days ago in Jean Paul Richter, the most magnificent of the German prose writers. Listen to his words! ‘A look into a pure loving eye; a word without falseness to a bride without falseness; and then a soft-breathing breast in

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which there is nothing but Paradise, a sermon and an evening prayer.' ”

He had already seen such a loving eye in a young American girl, Frances Appleton, whom he had met in Switzerland a few months after the death of his wife. He was then abroad, preparing himself for the chair of modern languages at Harvard, and he returned to America in December, 1836, without making any sentimental advances to Miss Appleton. But by the winter of 1838 he was writing a Byronic sort of travel romance, called “Hyperion,” in which he appeared as the hero, Paul Flemming, and Miss Appleton as Mary Ashburton, the heroine; and as Paul Flemming he made love to Frances Appleton with an autobiographic frankness that embarrassed some of his critics when the book was published in 1839, and seriously offended the lady. She forgave him, and they were married in 1843. Two years later, he could write in his journal: “Love fulfilled, the heart comforted, the soul enriched with affection.”

As a romantic Puritan, he solved the problem of the sex instinct by deflection rather than by repression. He held it faithfully to the path of constancy, but allowed it freedom in romantic courtship and marriage. Such a deflected sex instinct is very different from the repressed instinct of the Puritan reformer; its energy is utilized in ways that are of value to society; and there is none of the disguised aberrance that appears as asocial impulses and habits. Here Longfellow was the typical modern Puritan American of romantic ideals; and though such ideals in love and marriage are now considered chimerical by many, they produced a successful adjustment for that time and place, and they made a better foundation for American family life than any that has since been found. Along this path,



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American individualism, revolting against theocratic control and avoiding moral communism, found a road to social stability.

Longfellow died at seventy-five, after a busy, happy, and energetically healthy life. In so far as a literary career permits of the conversion of an individual's energy to the common good, he may be said to have attained the highest psychological success of which the Puritan American is capable. Twain—because his humor was a safety valve for the relief of collective rancours—may have been of greater value to the mass; but his own life was a psychological failure. Lincoln's services to the herd reached a point of energetic conversion far beyond Longfellow's, but his psychological happiness paid the price. Longfellow formed a coalition of his ego instinct and his herd instinct and preserved the best qualities of both. He made practical idealism the road to happiness, and he notably led the American people along that road.

## IX. *In Walt Whitman and Mark Hanna*

THERE was one revolt against Puritanism that produced some very distinguished but quite untypical Americans. Walt Whitman, Mark Hanna, John G. Whittier, and Susan B. Anthony are products of Quakerism, and it is impossible to understand their psychology, or to place them in the American scene, except by reference to the influence of Quakerism on the subconscious mind.

Quakerism, as a religious device, dissolved the Puritan's soul-fear in an astonishing way. The Puritan accepted interminable misery in hell as the ultimate end of the unsaved sinner; and he accepted, as the sinner's proximate end, calamity here and now. Rejecting all the traditional religious ceremonies and devices by which men had assured themselves of safety from Divine wrath here and hereafter, the Puritan relied upon intelligence to ascertain God's will from the Scriptures; he endeavored to save himself by obeying that will intelligently; he saw conscience as the warning that he had failed; he used intelligence again to ascertain wherein he had failed; and since his fear of hell never ceased, his conscience was never at rest, and his anxiety was unremitting. But the Quaker discarded intelligence wholly and went below it, to the subconscious mind for the evidence of salvation. He continually

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sought for that "accession of grace," that upwelling of subconscious transport, which the Western pioneer in America sought only spasmodically in the crowd ecstasies of revival meetings.

The first Quaker, George Fox (1624), was the son of parents of great piety in the Church of England. At nineteen he developed an adolescent melancholy, undoubtedly of sex origin. His later aberrations were apparently a flight from sex, which had been made a thing of horror to him by his training, and that horror produced its inevitable physical despair. He left his home and became a wanderer; and in the midst of scenes of pastoral innocence he reflected on God. Most persons have felt the quiet elation that comes in solitude when they see the peace and contentment of the trees and the birds that seem to live free and happy in a God-given and unworried security. Walt Whitman felt it and voiced it. Fox felt it. He reflected that there was a God who made all things; that this God was a god of loving care; that he dwelt in a temple not made by hands; and that Christ had redeemed all men. The whole thought was probably the upwelling of a desire for safety, inspired by the sight of protecting nature apparently caring for its wild things. He was suddenly aware of an inner elation which he accepted as proof of salvation by an accession of grace. On that experience he founded his religion, casting aside all forms of worship, and preaching that the inner impulse of the spirit was the sole guide to sanctity.

This occurred in Puritan England during Cromwell's day. It was the purest instance of subconscious revolt in modern religion. Fox denied any authority of teaching or intelligence over conscience. He accepted no superiority of anyone over the inspired man. He revolted equally against church and state. He refused to

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take oaths or to make war. He refused to remove his hat to any man or to submit to any authority except God's. Under persecution, his revolt hardened into the tenets of a sect that correlated his new beliefs with the pious teachings of his parents. He taught absolute honesty, truth-telling and promise-keeping—valuable aids to the health of commercial life and salient virtues in Mark Hanna's character. He crusaded against drunkenness; the Hanna family was conspicuous in the temperance agitation of its day. He gave women an almost equal place with men in his church organization, and Susan B. Anthony attempted to carry that equality into political organization also. Of course, he opposed war—and both Hanna and Whitman were Quakers in that respect during the American Civil War, although Hanna was finally drafted. In some respects Fox's doctrines were those of a cult of universal nature, and this is the backbone of Whitman's philosophy.

It is well to notice, however, that neither Quakerism, Universalism, Unitarianism, nor any other form of Deism, affected the tap root of Calvinism, conscience. Any cross-section of American life shows conscience operating as an attempt to attain finality, as an urge toward some kind of absolute rightness whether in education, philosophy, poetry, or business. Even idealism is probably a mental impulse to finalize a dream when unable to finalize reality. It is security that is sought. And, in that respect, Whitman and Hanna and Barnum and Carnegie are as rightly American as Lincoln and Emerson and Franklin and Mark Twain, since their mainspring of action seems to have been always a conversion of conscience into some attempt to reach security.

As Quakerism developed into a fixed creed, there were various revolts against its established form. Of



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these revolts, in America, the most radical was led by Elias Hicks, a Long Island Quaker, who (1826) "openly denied the divinity of Christ, depreciated the value of the Scriptures, and recognized no other Saviour than the inward light." Whitman's father, Mark Hanna's father, and Susan B. Anthony's father were among Hicks's followers. He despised creeds, churches, and all organizations of the religious life—as Whitman did. For Hicks and his disciples, religion consisted of a spiritual emotion induced in ecstatic silence—and Whitman's poetry attempted the same subconscious upwelling, in revolt against any intelligent control and all the reasoned and accepted forms of verse. That is his singularity in American literature.

It is interesting to parallel Quaker teaching with Whitman's dicta in his preface to the first edition of his "Leaves of Grass." The Quakers taught a sort of nature cult founded on the idea that "God, who made the world, does not dwell in a temple made by hands"; since all human beings were equally the recipients of the inner light, one should make no distinctions among them, nor "bow or scrape the leg to anyone," nor "take off the hat to any person, high or low"; authority could have no right over the soul that is directed by the inspiration of God, education could have no value to it, riches could only encumber it—and so forth. Compare these dogmas with the following paragraph from Whitman's first preface:

"This is what you shall do: love the earth and sun and animals, despise riches, give alms to anyone that asks, stand up for the stupid and crazy, devote your income and labor to others, hate tyrants, argue not concerning God, have patience and indulgence toward the people, take off your hat to nothing known or unknown, or to any man or number of men; go freely with

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powerful uneducated persons, and with the young, and mothers of families; read these leaves" (his poems) "in the open air every season of every year of your life; re-examine all you have been told at school or church, or in any book, and dismiss whatever insults your own soul."

Whitman was born in May, 1819, the son of a Long Island farmer and carpenter named Walter Whitman, whose father had been a familiar friend of Elias Hicks. Whitman wrote of his youth: "I can remember my father coming home toward sunset from his day's work as a carpenter, and saying briefly as he throws down an armful of blocks with a bounce on the kitchen floor, 'Come, mother, Elias preaches to-night.' " The mother was Louisa Van Velsor, a Quaker on her mother's side; and Whitman recalls the maternal grandmother's "sweet old face in its Quaker cap." But, following the teaching of Hicks, none of the family were church-goers; Walt Whitman never attended church; he never had anything to say about the religious experiences of his youth; and there is no biographic material by means of which to trace the Quaker influence upon his young mind.

There is, in fact, almost no psychologically significant data of any sort to be had about his early days. It is probable, from his later devotion to his mother, that he was her favorite child. He writes of himself in his "Leaves of Grass" as "raised by a perfect mother." He describes her: "The mother at home quietly placing the dishes on the supper table—The mother with mild words, clean her cap and gown, a wholesome odor falling off her person and clothes as she walks by." He wrote of her, after her death, as "the ideal woman, practical, spiritual, of all faith, life, love, to me the best." And the human relationship

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most sympathetically portrayed in his poems is the relationship of mother and son.

As an indication of early revolt against his father, there are these two lines in his picture of his childhood:

“The father strong, self-sufficient, manly, mean,  
    angered, unjust.

The blow, the quick loud word, the tight bargain,  
    the crafty lure.”

And it is evident that he soon transferred his dislike of the “mean” and “unjust” father to his father’s world of industry and business, the world of “the tight bargain” and “the crafty lure.”

The first four years of his life were spent on the farm, and he says of himself:

“The early lilacs became part of this child,

And the grass and white and red morning glories, and the  
    white and red clover, and the song of the phœbe-bird.”

But it is only from his later development that one may surmise how deeply associated in his mind were his mother’s love and the beauty of nature. Presumably he began life, devotedly protected and indulged by his mother, in scenes of pastoral charm and peacefulness; and such scenes, forever afterward, gave him the sense of security and happiness that he had felt as an infant in his mother’s arms. He turned to them eagerly from his father’s world of work and competition and worry and responsibility. And his mother’s fondness for him must have been sufficiently doting and indulgent to give him a permanent fixation of affection on her (which prevented him from marrying) and to set him in that habit of self-love which is peculiarly the danger of the adored child.

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He may have been a neurotic infant; he was the second of nine children, of whom the youngest was an imbecile and the oldest died a lunatic. In one anecdote of his boyhood he describes how he saw a man fall from a hayrick, and was so horrified by the sight that he "ran miles away"; and this is an excess of shock which may indicate again the Narcissan tendency of a favorite child—the fear of bodily injury that comes of a morbid self-devotion. For the rest, we may surmise a certain patriotism in the home, from the fact that three of his brothers were named George Washington, Andrew Jackson, and Thomas Jefferson; and we may conjecture that out of this patriotism arose Whitman's later impulse to make himself the typical American poet who "sang democracy."

When he was four years old the family removed to Brooklyn, which was then a village with a population of some seven thousand, but he and the other children made frequent visits to the farms of their relatives, and his recollections of his boyhood are chiefly concerned with such holidays, jaunts to the seashore, and tramps through the countryside. He remained at school till he was thirteen, but he did not distinguish himself as a scholar. There was no culture in his family; his mother could never more than read and write; his father, apparently, had little education. It was evidently the poverty of the family that sent him to work at fourteen, as an errand boy in the office of a lawyer named Clarke. His continued antagonism to his father is indicated by the fact that he did not follow his father's trade.

In the lawyer's office, "I had," he says, "a nice desk and window nook to myself; Edward Clarke kindly help'd me at my handwriting and composition, and (the signal event of my life up to that time) subscribed for me to a big circulating library. For a time I now



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revel'd in romance-reading of all kinds; first the *Arabian Nights*, all the volumes, an amazing treat. Then, with sorties in very many other directions, took in Walter Scott's novels, one after another, and his poetry." The latter he refers to again as "an inexhaustible mine and treasury" which he cherished for fifty years.

Supported by this escape into romance and day-dreaming, he drifted from the lawyer's office to a doctor's office, and then to employment in the printing office of the *Long Island Patriot*, a weekly newspaper, where at fifteen he became an apprenticed typesetter. He must have relieved the tedium of work with long holidays in which he ran away to the scenes of his childhood, for he notes "being down on Long Island more or less every summer, now east, now west, sometimes months at a stretch." He said afterwards, "The time of my boyhood was a very restless and unhappy one; I did not know what to do." He wrote what he called some "sentimental bits" for the *Patriot*, and "had a piece or two in George P. Morris's then celebrated and fashionable *Mirror*, in New York City. I remember with what half-suppressed excitement I used to watch for . . . the carrier who distributed the *Mirror* in Brooklyn; and when I got one, opening and cutting the leaves with trembling fingers. How it made my heart double-beat to see my piece on the pretty white paper in nice type!"

This is the first reality (beyond mother and nature) that is recorded as attractive to him—the real egoistic satisfaction of self-expression. He evidently found the same satisfaction in debate; "he developed a fondness for debating societies, and at seventeen was a member of more than one, in Brooklyn and in near-by villages"; and the urge to lecture continued for many years, along

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with the urge to write. There may have been some association with the public platform in his next departure into school-teaching, at which he continued for two or three years, from the age of about eighteen, in various country villages of Queens and Suffolk counties. One of his old pupils later recalled: "The girls did not attract him. He did not specially go anywhere with them or show any extra fondness for their society." But, "before and after school, he was a boy among boys, always free, always easy, never stiff. He took an active part in games of frolic." These are plausible indications, again, of a mother fixation and of a tendency to seek to recover childhood's happiness by the road of recession. He continued to write; one of his pupils remembers that he would "lay down on his back on the grass in the sun, then get up and do some writin', and the folks used to say he was idlin'." He "boarded round." He was "not religious in any way . . . to the special regret of a friendly mother of four daughters with whom he boarded," says Bliss Perry, in his life of Whitman. And Perry adds that "he was diffident with women."

In 1839, at the age of twenty, he gave up school-teaching, and got financial backing to start a weekly country newspaper, the *Long Islander*, in the town of Huntington. This paper he not only printed, but delivered, driving "all around the country serving my papers, devoting one day and night to it." He never, he says, "had happier jaunts," but the jaunting was the only part of his work that he seems to have enjoyed. He blames his "restlessness" for making it impossible to continue with the newspaper, and after a year or two he surrendered it to his backers, and went to New York to become editor of the *Daily Aurora* (1841).

The proprietor of the *Aurora* thought him "the

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laziest fellow who ever undertook to edit a city paper." One of his associates records that he came to the office between eleven and twelve o'clock each morning, looked over the exchanges, went for a stroll down Broadway to the Battery—"spending an hour or two among the trees and enjoying the water view"—and returned to his desk about two or three o'clock in the afternoon. He was "tall and graceful in appearance, neat in attire, and possessed a very pleasing and impressive eye and a cheerful and happy-looking countenance." Most unexpectedly, "he usually wore a frock coat and a high hat, carried a small cane, and the lapel of his coat was almost invariably ornamented with a boutonnière." In fact, he had begun a period of "continued personal ambition and effort," as he afterward said, "to enter with the rest into competition for the usual rewards, business, political, literary, etc."—and he dressed himself for the part.

Having lost his position on the *Daily Aurora*, he lived as a free-lance in New York for five or six years, frequenting Bohemian resorts such as Pfaff's restaurant, going to the theater and the opera on press tickets, idling on the water front, sitting in pilot houses with the captains of ferryboats, riding up and down Broadway with the drivers of the Broadway buses, and writing traditional short stories and conventional verse for the magazines and literary journals of the day. Poe was his most obvious model for his short stories. They are commonplace productions, done without any great artistic conscience, for the purpose of earning a living. The worst of them was an anonymous novel "Franklin Evans; or The Inebriate: a Tale of the Times," written as a temperance tract for a weekly story paper, the *New World*. "He wrote it," a friend relates, "mostly in the reading room of Tammany Hall,

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which was a sort of Bohemian resort, and he afterwards told me that he frequently indulged in gin cocktails, while writing it, at the 'Pewter Mug,' another resort for Bohemians around the corner in Spruce Street." His story, "One Wicked Impulse," published in 1845, closes with the guilty man finding absolution in the bosom of nature. A poem, called "Ambition" (1843), represents a solitary young man asking himself, "Shall I, in time to come, be great and famed?"—and being told by a cloud-formed shape to "view the solemn stars" and reflect how "puny seem the widest power, the proudest mortal name." Another early poem, "Death of the Nature Lover," was printed in a weekly journal with a prefatory note from the editor: "The following wants but a half hour's polish to make of it an effusion of very uncommon beauty." The first stanza is typical:

"Not in a gorgeous hall of pride,  
Where tears fall thick, and loved ones sigh,  
Wished he, when the dark hour approached,  
To drop his veil of flesh and die."

These contributions were all signed "Walter Whitman," the name by which he was then known. As a child, he had been called "Walt" to distinguish him from his father, but he seems to have become "Walter" after leaving home, and he used that name up to the age of thirty-six.

As Walter Whitman, he competed unsuccessfully for a conventional literary reputation. He went into the formal society of his day. "I have been with him often in the society of ladies," a friend testifies, "and I never knew of any women young or old but thought him a most agreeable gentleman of great culture." He



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took some part in politics and went on the stump in political campaigns. He read chiefly newspapers and magazines. "At intervals," he says, "summers and falls, I used to go off, sometimes for weeks at a stretch, down in the country, or to Long Island's seashores, and there, in the presence of outdoor influences, I went over thoroughly the Old and New Testaments, and absorbed . . . Shakespeare, Ossian, the best translated versions I could get of Homer, Eschylus, Sophocles, the ancient Hindoo poems, and one or two other masterpieces, Dante's among them." He went especially to Coney Island, which he describes as "a long, bare unfrequented shore, which I had all to myself, and where I loved, after bathing, to race up and down the hard sand, and declaim Homer or Shakespeare to the surf and sea gulls by the hour." He was not a brilliant journalist or a clever magazine writer. His desire for literary self-expression was not backed even by the temperamental active-mindedness of the ordinary literary man. He had no sense of humor. He was placid, egotistic, slow, and idle. He developed no mental dexterity by means of which to maximate his ego in his attack upon reality; he was consequently dissatisfied with reality as he saw it around him in the town; and he regularly escaped from it to the seashore and the country that he had known in his childhood.

At the age of twenty-seven or twenty-eight he became editor of the Brooklyn *Eagle*, living with his father and mother, and doing his editorial work with the same degree of leisureliness that had annoyed the proprietor of the *Daily Aurora*. Of his editorials, "the style was slovenly," says Perry, "and the thought quite without distinction." As, in his idleness, he tended to identify himself with ferry pilots and bus drivers, so, in his editorials, he was sympathetic with the common

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man, and in his politics he was radical, anti-slavery and a Free-Soiler. This may have been in part the usual transference of a revolt against the father to a revolt against authority; but as a champion of the slave he was also, like Whittier, a good Quaker. "The troubles in the Democratic party broke forth," he says, while he was on the *Eagle*. "I split off with the Radicals, which led to rows with the boss and 'the party' and I lost my place"—in the newspaper office.

A chance encounter in a theater lobby brought him an offer of a job in New Orleans on the staff of a new daily that was to be called the *Crescent*. He accepted the opportunity to take another "jaunt." "I started two days afterwards," he relates, and "had a good leisurely time, as the paper wasn't to be out in three or four weeks. I enjoyed my journey and Louisiana venture very much." He took with him a younger brother, Jeff, fifteen years old, and made the trip by way of Pennsylvania, Virginia, the Ohio River and the Mississippi; a few months later they returned up the Mississippi to Chicago, through the Great Lakes to Niagara Falls, and so home. The excuse for their return was Jeff's homesickness and the fact that the climate did not agree with him, but there is evidence that Walter had become involved in a love affair in New Orleans and fled from it.

He was now thirty years old. He settled down with his father and mother in Brooklyn, "paying board whenever he had money" and planning a series of lectures. "He wrote," his brother George says, "what mother called barrels of lectures. He would lie abed late, and after getting up would write a few hours if he took the notion—perhaps he would go off the rest of the day. We were all at work—all except Walt." In 1850-51, he launched a Free-Soil weekly, the Brooklyn

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*Freeman.* In March, 1851, he delivered a lecture, before the Brooklyn Art Union, on the duty of the artist to "go forth into all the world and preach the gospel of beauty," particularly in America, where "matter-of-fact is everything and the ideal nothing . . . a nation of whom the steam engine is no bad symbol." He saw beauty especially as the beauty of nature, and saw in all the great artists of the past "that ardor for liberty which is a constituent part of all well-developed artists." He ended, rather incoherently: "I conclude here, as there can be no true artist without a glowing thought of freedom—so freedom pays the artist back again many fold, and under her umbrage art must sooner or later tower to its loftiest and most perfect proportions."

He had now arrived at the crisis of his life. His lecture project came to nothing. Journalism and magazine work had failed him as a means of self-glorification. "After continued personal ambition and effort, as a young fellow," he says, "to enter with the rest into competition for the usual rewards, business, political, literary, etc.—to take part in the great mêlée, both for victory's prize itself and to do some good—after years of those aims and pursuits, I found myself remaining possess'd, at the age of thirty-one to thirty-three, with a special desire and conviction. Or rather, to be quite exact, a desire that had been flitting through my previous life, or hovering on the flanks, mostly indefinite hitherto, had steadily advanced to the front, defined itself, and finally dominated everything else. This was a feeling or ambition to articulate and faithfully express in literary or poetic form, and uncompromisingly, my own physical, emotional, moral, intellectual and æsthetic Personality, in the midst of, and tallying, the momentous spirit and facts of its immediate day, and of

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current America—and to exploit that Personality, identified with place and date, in a far more candid and comprehensive sense than any hitherto poem or book.”

Apparently as the first step toward identifying himself with “current America,” he put on workingman’s clothes and joined his father as a carpenter in building and selling small wooden houses in the suburbs of Brooklyn. His friend John Burroughs is authority for the statement that Whitman could never have handled a hammer and saw with any skill, but he continued for four or five years working with his father and writing the poems that were to exploit his personality. In his preface to those poems, he turned his back contemptuously on the current American reality.

“Beyond the independence of a little sum laid aside for burial money,” he wrote, “and of a few clapboards around and shingles overhead on a lot of American soil owned, and the easy dollars that supply the year’s plain clothing and meals, the melancholy prudence of the abandonment of such a great being as man is, to the toss and pallor of years of money-making, with all their scorching days and icy nights and all their stifling deceptions and underhand dodging, or infinitesimals of parlors or shameless stuffing while others starve . . . and all the loss of the bloom and odor of the earth and of the flowers and atmosphere and of the sea and of the taste of the women and men you pass or have to do with in youth or middle age, and the issuing sickness and desperate revolt of a life without elevation or naïveté, and the ghastly chatter of a death without serenity or majesty, is the great fraud upon modern civilization.” In other words, while attempting to identify himself with current America as an artisan, he really despised the activities that made up the general life of the time as well as the life of the artisan whom he was to sing.



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He turned to "the bloom and odor of the earth and of the flowers and atmosphere and of the sea," with his old craving for the life of his childhood in his mother's arms among the flowers, away from all social responsibility. Driven back from reality into a childish regression and seeing himself with the Narcissism of the adored son, he sought to exploit his personality in a sort of exhibitionism. "I celebrate myself," he said in his first line. And like an exhibitionistic child, he stripped himself bare. He paraded his beloved body nude in exulting stanzas, as he had run up and down the beach at Coney Island. He had no urgent thought to communicate; he wished to be "a master after my own kind, making the poems of emotions." His literary method was an attempt to reveal the stream of un-directed reverie by permitting ideas to flow in a free association. To a certain extent, therefore, he released his subconscious mind, but he released it under a censorship, and that censorship was the suggestion of the expected idea that he was the great representative democratic American.

Consequently, there are two distinct strains in his first poems. There is the surface assumption that he is a representative American who is "singing democracy," and there is the deeper drift which Lafcadio Hearn perceived as the "antique sylvan deity, the faun or the satyr," singing sex. Contrary to the general belief of Whitman's admirers, the appearance of such sensual material in his verse is good evidence that Whitman never experienced the dissoluteness which he celebrates. The sexual expression in his poems is obviously a compensation in phantasy for the lack of a potency that was denied him in experience. Much of this sexual expression is dangerously near the homosexual level, which is to be expected where the sexual impulse is

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anchored by a mother fixation and unable to achieve heterosexual goal. When some of his poems made an English critic suspect that he was homosexual, he wrote, at the age of seventy-two: "My life, young manhood, mid-age, times South, etc., have been jolly bodily, and doubtless open to criticism. Though unmarried, I have had six children—two are dead—one living Southern grandchild, fine boy, writes to me occasionally—circumstances (connected with their fortune and benefit) have separated me from intimate relations." But Perry gives some evidence that this letter was the boast of an old man's vanity, as well as being an exaggeration to allay the English critic's suspicion of him. It is probable that Whitman's sole love affair was the Louisiana one; he may have had predatory relations with other women, but they must have been largely gestures of the ego. In any case, he was certainly not normal sexually, and his sexual poems are exhibitionistic, infantile, and as truly compensatory as Emerson's doctrine of self-reliance.

His assumption that he was a representative American singing democracy was equally false, but it was more conscious. He published as a frontispiece for his first edition a photo of himself dressed as a workman, wearing a slouch hat, coatless, in an outing shirt with a soft collar open at the neck to show his undershirt, his hand on his hip in a nonchalant attitude. He would have looked as much like a workman in his high hat, his frock coat, and his boutonnière. It is the portrait not of a personality, but of a pose. And he was seemingly aware of it as a pose. He wrote an anonymous review of his book for the *Brooklyn Times* of September 29, 1855, and every line of that review betrays how conscious he was of his newly assumed rôle. "Very devilish to some," he says, "and very divine to some will

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appear the poet of these new poems, the 'Leaves of Grass'; an attempt, as they are, of a naïve, masculine, affectionate, contemplative, sensual, imperious person, to cast into literature not only his own grit and arrogance, but his own flesh and form, undraped, regardless of models, regardless of modesty and law, and ignorant or silently scornful, as first appears, of all except his own presence and experience, and all outside the fiercely loved land of his birth, and the birth of his parents, and their parents for several generations before him." Observe the plentiful lack of real naïveté in the announcement that he is "naïve," the absence of real masculinity in the boast that he is "masculine," of real imperiousness in the assurance that he is "imperious," of any real probability that he is either affectionate or sensual or that he has either true grit or arrogance when he comes forward to beat the drum and ballyhoo the show of those qualities in himself. Observe how far he is from being either "ignorant or silently scornful of all except his own presence." Consider how aware he must have been even of his own exhibitionism when he got up before his tent to promise the public that they could see his own "flesh and form, undraped," and "regardless of modesty and law" if they paid the entrance fee and bought his book.

He goes on glibly describing himself as "a rude child of the people," "a careless slouch enjoying to-day," "a man who is art-and-part with the commonalty," who "likes the ungenteel ways of laborers" and is "not prejudiced one mite against the Irish," in fact "talks readily with them" and "talks readily with niggers." In his poems, he says, "you may feel the unconscious teaching of a fine brute"—and that word "unconscious" is delightful. He describes himself: "Of pure American breed, large and lusty—age thirty-six years—never

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once using medicine—never dressed in black, always dressed freely and clean in strong clothes—neck open, shirt collar flat, and broad countenance tawny, transparent red . . . his physiology corroborating a rugged phrenology.” After all his years as a literary man, as a debater, a stump speaker and a would-be lecturer, he announces that he is “one who does not associate with literary people, a man never called upon to make speeches at public dinners—never on platforms amid crowds of clergymen, or professors or aldermen or congressmen.” “There,” he says, “you have Walt Whitman, the begetter of a new offspring out of literature, taking with easy nonchalance the chances of its present reception”—part of the easy nonchalance being this eager anonymous ballyhoo of his nonchalance—“and, through all misunderstandings and distrusting, the chances of its future reception, preferring always to speak for himself rather than have others speak for him”—and in that final phrase, as it were, insulting himself as an anonymous reviewer for the greater glory of the nonchalant poet whom he was praising.

And he did this sort of thing for himself not once, but many times. As late as 1872, in Washington he wrote an anonymous review of his poems in the same terms: “This Walt Whitman—this queer one whom most of us have watched, with more or less amusement, walking by—good-natured with everybody, like some farmer, or mate of some coasting vessel, familiarly accosted by all, hardly any one of us stopping to Mr. him” and so forth. It was as if Walter Whitman, the journalist, having written a fanciful poetical autobiography of himself as a naïve and uncultured carpenter named Walt Whitman, then dressed himself for the part, and wrote of himself in the newspapers as living the part, and proceeded to try to live it for the rest of



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his days. The Walter Whitman behind the disguise did not change. He remained a Narcissan egotist, unable to maximate his ego in contact with reality and trying to satisfy it in phantasy.

His book, though it had a success of scandal, did not sell. His father had died in the month of its publication, July, 1855. Whitman gave up his trade as a carpenter and settled down under his mother's roof, supported by her and his brothers, writing poems. He borrowed money freely of friends and acquaintances. "He persuaded one man of letters, then recently married," says Perry, "to intrust to him the whole of a slender fortune, which was straightway lost in speculation. His friend brought suit to recover, but it was like trying to coin a vacuum." He planned a series of lectures, but delivered none. Between 1855 and 1860 he wrote more than a hundred new poems and added them to new editions of his book, but the sale of it continued meager. When the Civil War broke out, with the bombardment of Fort Sumter April 12, 1861, he read the news at midnight, on his way home from the opera in Fourteenth Street; and, as Perry says, "for the next eighteen months there is practically no record of Walt Whitman." His brother George, ten years younger than he, promptly enlisted. Walt stayed home with his mother. But what was going on in his mind is sufficiently indicated by a vow that has been found in one of his notebooks, dated April 16, 1861, four days after the outbreak of hostilities: "I have this day, this hour, resolved to inaugurate for myself a pure, perfect, sweet, clean-blooded robust body, by ignoring all drinks but water and pure milk, and all fat meats, late suppers—a great body, a purged, cleansed, spiritualized, invigorated body." The Narcissan who as a boy had "run miles away" from the sight of a bodily

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injury, was unable to take his beloved flesh into the dangers of the battlefield; he tried to compensate by means of a vow of purification that should, as it were, make his idol even more worthy of his respect. This vow of purification was a vow of expiation also. And he followed it with acts of expiation. He acted as a volunteer nurse for sick bus drivers in the New York Hospital, and when his brother was wounded in battle, December, 1862, he went South to nurse George, and remained in Washington, living with friends, going the rounds of the hospitals, writing letters home for the wounded, and distributing among them little luxuries that were supplied him by contributions from the North. As late as April 10, 1864, he was writing home to his mother: "The war must be carried on, and I could willingly go myself in the ranks if I thought it would profit more than at present, and I don't know sometimes but I shall as it is." Instead, he worked on his book of poems, *Drum Taps*, continued his visits to the hospitals—with an interval of rest in Brooklyn after a breakdown of his health—and pressed his application for a clerkship in the government service, which he at last obtained, in February, 1865, just before Lincoln's second inauguration.

After the war closed he remained in Washington, working as a government clerk, with occasional visits home, until the death of his mother in 1873. He formed in Washington a circle of friends of whom the most intimate was young Peter Doyle, a street-car conductor, and the most distinguished was John Burroughs. He became a picturesque figure on the streets of the capital in his striking gray costume, and his photographs were on sale in souvenir shops from 1868 on. He had apparently no relations with women. Doyle says: "I never knew a case of Walt's being

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bothered up by a woman. Women in that sense never entered his head. Walt was too clean. No trace of any kind of dissipation in him. I ought to know about him those years—we were awful close together.” They were, in fact, constant companions, and when Whitman was away he wrote to Doyle as “dear baby,” “dearest boy,” “my darling son,” and sometimes sent him a “good long” kiss “on the paper here.”

He wrote at night, either in his attic room or in his office. “I go evenings up to the office frequently,” he wrote to his mother. “I have got me a splendid astral lamp, to burn gas by a tube, & it works to admiration, (all at the expense of the office)—& there I can sit, & read &c, as nice as you please—then I am getting many books for the Library (our office Library) that I have long wanted to read at my leisure—and can get any book I want in reason—so you see it is a great privilege I have here.” And again: “I pass the time very quietly—some evenings I spend in my attic—I have laid in wood and can have a fire when I want it—I wish you was here.”

On the night of the 23d of January, 1873, he sat late in his office by his astral lamp, reading a Bulwer-Lytton novel, and went to his lodgings looking ill. He woke up between three and four in the morning to find himself partially paralyzed. He recovered sufficiently by the end of March to return to his office for a few hours each day, but he was called home in May by the serious illness of his mother; she died May 23d; and he never went back to work. For the last nineteen years of his life he lived as a semi-invalid in Camden, New Jersey, at first in his dead mother’s room in his brother’s house, and later in a home of his own which he purchased with money partly obtained from the sale of his poems and partly lent him by friends. He was sup-

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posed to be at various times on the verge of actual want; benefit editions of his work were published in England and the proceeds sent him by his admirers; public subscriptions were taken up for him there and in America; charitable sums were collected from benefit lectures which he gave. Yet when he died in 1891 it was found that during the previous year he had spent \$4000 on a massive tomb for himself in Harleigh Cemetery, like a true Narcissan.

He has been accepted abroad, on the terms of his own advertising, as the great poet of the American democracy, but Puritan America has never accepted him, and it is unlikely that it ever will. He has no appeal for the great mass of Americans because his life gave him no experience of the ordinary emotions of mankind and consequently his verse gives them no voice. As John Burroughs said: "The home, the fire-side, the domestic allurements are not in him; love, as we find it in other poets, is not in him; the idyllic, except in touches here and there, is not in him; the choice, the finished, the perfumed, the romantic, the charm of art and the delight of form, are not to be looked for in his pages." In many of his poems, he goes on long phantasied "jaunts," through scenes and cities, among people and occupations, past dramas and incidents, all of which he describes as if he saw them with the eye only—the eye of a detached and self-centered spectator who seeks in vain to project his ego, for literary purposes, into the characters and emotions of his world. He could imagine the feelings of mother and son, and after his affectionate intercourse with young Doyle he understood something of the relations of father and son; but for the most part he could only celebrate himself and his own egotistic emotions that were too often morbid and untypical. And being untypical, he throws



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no light on the American mind—no matter what his rank and fame as a poet—except by virtue of America's rejection of him and of his claim to speak for her.

Marcus Alonzo Hanna, born September, 1837, was the eldest son of a well-to-do family of Hicksite Quakers in New Lisbon, Ohio. His father, Leonard Hanna, educated as a doctor, became a business man after an accident to his spine that made it difficult for him to practice medicine, but he never wholly devoted himself to commercial affairs. He was a conspicuous temperance agitator, a vigorous opponent of slavery (like all the Quakers), a popular stump speaker in the abolition interest, and an unsuccessful candidate for office as a Congressman in the Whig party. The mother, Samantha Converse, born in Vermont, came to Ohio with her parents as a child, and arrived in New Lisbon as a school-teacher. She was a woman of some culture, with "a taste for flowers, ornaments, and good furniture," and the Hanna home was "not only unusually genial for its time and place, but it was also unusually refined." Leonard Hanna had put himself outside the Quaker congregation by marrying a New England Presbyterian, but he "considered himself to be by conviction a member of that sect," even though he attended the Presbyterian church with his wife.

Herbert Croly's official biography of Mark Hanna gives no material by which to estimate the influence of religion on Hanna's childhood, except to say that "as a boy" he "could joke with impunity about his religious convictions." Apparently, no effort—and certainly no successful effort—was made to depress his young ego. "There seems to have been less discipline and more kindliness" in the Hanna household, says Croly, "than was usual in American homes of that

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period." The father was kindly and easy-going, and he did not believe in whipping children. If the mother attempted to discipline her eldest son rigorously, she failed. A certain resistance to her is implied in his behavior toward her sister, Hattie Converse, who lived with the family, taught school in the town, and had Mark in her classes at an early age. She evidently undertook to act as a surrogate for his mother; he seems to have plagued her mischievously; and she punished him for it—as well as for a real or fancied roughness to the other children—until his father interfered. At the age of eight, she found him loitering in the street on his way home from school. "She took him to task. . . . He asserted that her authority did not extend beyond the school buildings and grounds. She asserted that it did. The issue was presented to his parents and they decided in his favor."

He was removed from her classes to a public school, but his resistance to study continued, and he was more noted for his leadership in schoolboy pranks than for any application to his lessons. He was evidently his father's boy rather than his mother's, eager at an early age to go to work, and indifferent to his mother's—and his mother's sister's—ideals of culture and education. He imitated his father's platform activities by taking part in a boy's debating club, called "The Polydelphian Society of New Lisbon," of which he became secretary. "On the question, 'Have the Negroes more cause for complaint against the whites than the Indians?' . . . Mark Hanna took the side of the black man and won his cause." The town had its usual boy gangs that met and fought in its streets and fields, and he was the leader of one of these, "the Midtown gang." Says Croly: "He was active, willing, sociable, generous, friendly, mischievous, high-spirited, and aggressive."

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He was, in fact, a normal American boy of the middle classes, with a sturdy egotism well founded in parental tolerance and early socialized by contact with his rough young herd.

At the age of fifteen "he asserted his independence and the maturity of his years" by insisting that he was engaged to be married to a young girl of the village, and he made his parents recognize the engagement. And here we have an aspect of the common American relations between boys and girls that is generally overlooked in diatribes against the Puritan sex repression of earlier days. Even in communities in which dancing was taboo, the young people were encouraged to go together, to keep "steady" company, to spoon, to play kissing games. The boy of six or seven was unconsciously taught to look forward to having a sweetheart. He was proud of having a particular girl pick him out for kissing. They began to be constant companions; their relation was permitted and respected; they were given every liberty, and their elders rarely questioned what went on between them. It was understood that any untowardness must be paid for by immediate marriage. If seduction occurred and the boy did not marry, the community became a hell for him—provided the girl had no male relatives old enough to relieve the community of the task. The actual danger of vice may have been apparent to the elders, but it was rarely spoken of in connection with "keeping company" and "spooning." Flirting was forbidden. Social peace and safety depended largely on early monogamous fixations, and anything which diffused the sex impulse, so that it failed to fix itself on one person, was unconsciously opposed. The marriages that followed were, for the most part, stable. The habit of being with one wife followed the habit of one sweetheart after one

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mother, and the illicit impulse was effectively restrained. This single-track romantic impulse was probably the greatest safeguard for social sex morality that America developed.

In so far as these customs still prevail in the American small community, the current Greenwich Village complaint of Puritanic social repression in the small town is an ignorant complaint. The average boy who grows up on Main Street takes advantage of his opportunities to make sexual attachments freely and spontaneously, or he is one who has been distorted at home into what his companions call a "mamma's boy" and a "'fraid cat." The Puritanism which the Greenwich Villagers presume to be functioning in the small town is deduced by them from the apparent religiosity of the community; when Puritanism does function there as a sex repression, it is an inner Puritanism in the particular boy or girl, derived from home teaching and the neurotic parent. Sex, indeed, is more normal and spontaneous in its expression in the average American small town than it is in the circles of the metropolitan intelligentsia, who commonly make the mistake of thinking that sex can be freed by conversation.

Mark Hanna's engagement at fifteen was not untypical. The loyalty with which he respected that engagement was characteristic. The Hanna family had invested too heavily in a canal project that was to have made New Lisbon a prosperous trade center. With the failure of the canal the family fortune was depleted and New Lisbon was no place in which to re-establish it. Mark Hanna's father and uncle removed their households to Cleveland, to found a grocery and commission business (1852), and for nine years the boy continued to return from Cleveland to New Lisbon to see his village sweetheart. The fact that he was en-



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gaged to be married was not allowed to interfere with his schooling, and for four years and a half his parents compelled him to continue in the public schools of Cleveland, but when they forced him to go on, then, to the Western Reserve College, he resisted. The resistance seems to have finally taken the effective form of an unruliness that ended in his suspension for a practical joke that offended the college authorities; and he entered his father's business, in 1855, at the age of twenty-one, as a clerk in the warehouse and a "general roustabout on the docks" in "jumper and overalls."

He entered, also, the young society of the town, became captain of the Ydrad Boat Club, "a conspicuous figure at parties and dances of all kinds," and altogether a popular young man. When he went to visit his sweetheart in New Lisbon he took her, frequently, dresses in the city style—from which a good deal may be inferred. "She was shy, awkward, and not at all lively." She was invited to visit the Hanna home in Cleveland and she could not hold her own with his new friends. "She either refused to bear Mark company . . . or, if she did, she made an indifferent showing." When she returned to her home "she realized that she and Mark could never be married," and "New Lisbon firmly believed that Samantha Hanna had arranged the visit in order that both of the young couple might have their eyes opened." Mark went to visit her in New Lisbon, soon afterward, and told her "face to face that it was all over." New Lisbon did not see him again for thirty years.

His father's firm put him out as a salesman in the towns of northern Ohio, and he was thus "one of the first commercial travelers in the United States." He was "an exceedingly successful salesman," but he was by no means devoted to business. His social successes

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were more grateful to his young ego. There was, however, no dissipation in his social life; "he never cared particularly for horse-racing," but he joined his companions in it "because he did not want to be left behind"; "although an enthusiastic card-player, he rather avoided poker"; "his gayety was innocent in intention and harmless in its results"; "he never even touched beer and whisky, and he sowed no wild oats."

When the Civil War broke out in 1861 his father was dying of the spinal trouble with which he had suffered for years, and Mark Hanna, as the eldest son, remained at home to manage the business while a younger brother enlisted. He did, however, join a company of militia for home defense, and in 1864 this company was drafted into regular service, and he acted as first lieutenant during the hundred days that his troop did garrison duty in the forts that guarded Washington. He was never under fire.

Evidently it was not only his duty to his family that kept him from seeing service earlier. In the spring of 1862 he had met and fallen in love with the daughter of Daniel P. Rhodes, a coal and iron merchant of Cleveland, who objected to Hanna because, as a Republican, Hanna was "a damned screecher for freedom." Rhodes forbade his daughter to see Hanna, and during the early years of the war Hanna was engaged in a conflict of his own with the domineering will of his future father-in-law. With the aid of the daughter, who "pleaded and wept," languished and fell ill, Rhodes was slowly worn down. When Hanna was mustered into service the engagement was recognized. On his safe return from Washington he and Miss Rhodes were married. "It's all over now, Mark," Rhodes said, "but a month ago I would like to have seen you at the bottom of Lake Erie."

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It was far from all over. Rhodes wanted his daughter to live in his home with her husband, "under his thumb." Hanna endured it for more than a year before he got his wife moved to a home of his own. Then he met with business reverses. A boat in which he had invested heavily was sunk—"a total loss." He was taken ill with typhoid fever. A petroleum refinery that he had built burned down. Hanna felt that he had "got to the bottom." Rhodes walked in, grimly jubilant. "Now," he said, "I guess you two young fools will be good and come home." And while they were packing to go with him he rejoiced, "Your money's all gone, Mark, and I'm damned glad of it."

Hanna was by this time thirty years old, a father, and "worth several thousand dollars less than nothing." He had been a failure as an independent business man chiefly because he went into ventures without having saved sufficient capital to back him in a run of bad luck. He was without the psychic anxiety that made for thrift and caution in such men as his neighbor, John D. Rockefeller, for instance, who was beginning his fortune in oil when Mark Hanna began and lost. And Hanna was without the withdrawn and secretive qualities necessary to the generalship of a large campaign of business or finance. He needed the human contact. He was most efficient as a salesman. His social genius made him most valuable in a business that was personal.

He found his proper field in his father-in-law's commission house, Rhodes & Co., of which he became the head when Daniel Rhodes retired. The firm was an agency for the sale of coal and iron, but it owned coal and iron mines, and built and operated lake vessels for the handling of its mine products. The separate members of the co-partnership had individual interests in

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mines and boats and smelters, and these interests fed the central agency with business. The organization was thus a loosely constructed sales company, well suited to Hanna's peculiar abilities. He succeeded in it famously, and as he made money he branched out into personal ventures of all sorts. He bought a Cleveland newspaper and became involved in one of those newspaper quarrels of the period that were so endlessly abusive. He blundered into the ownership of a theater and took a characteristic pleasure in his relations with the "visiting stars" who came to Cleveland on tour and were entertained by him in his home. He founded a bank, apparently because one of his friends, a banker, was out of a position. He drifted into the ownership and restoration of a street railway because it ran past his home and gave him and his neighbors poor service. He had voted and electioneered and served at the polls from his boyhood; he had encouraged his young business associates to make themselves felt in party management and to resist corrupt politicians who preyed on business interests; now his street railway took him into municipal politics and his newspaper ownership involved him in the larger fields of party activities. In all his affairs he had a scrupulous ideal of business honesty and personal loyalty. His word was as good as his bond, and he fulfilled his contracts faithfully at whatever cost to himself. These Quaker traits and a delight in social contact made him trusted and popular in business circles. His energies, unchoked by Puritan soul-fears, worked smoothly at the service of a powerful egotism. "He always wanted to place himself at the head of his associates in the prosecution of any business enterprise," says Croly. "When he sat in a game, he usually won, and he usually occupied or came to occupy a seat at the head of the table."



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In short, he was the leader of his gang, as he had been in New Lisbon, by virtue of the qualities that he had shown in his boyhood. His gang was a business gang, and in politics he was wholly loyal to their interests; but in New Lisbon he had been one of the aristocrats of the village, and he continued to act with something of an aristocrat's sense of social responsibility in his political manipulations and with a kindly and paternal feeling in his dealings with his employees. After one disastrous clash with union labor in his Massillon mines, he seems to have decided that workingmen had as much right to form a union as business men had to form a trust, and that the relations between labor and capital could be the more easily adjusted by a few responsible leaders on both sides meeting and bargaining together. In the final years of his life he was patriotically successful in preventing several industrial wars by arranging and influencing such meetings.

As Croly points out, Hanna was a product of pioneer days in his conception of the duties of the government toward business. All the pioneers had looked to the government for favors. Agriculture had received free land, and industry a protective tariff. The railroads were given huge land grants. The initiative of early exploitation was encouraged with free timber and mines. By Hanna's time in politics, state encouragement of this sort had begun to be encouragement of "special interests," but he continued to live in the earlier tradition. To him it was the government's duty to support business prosperity because he believed that prosperity made a better nation, as prosperous individuals made a better community. The party, to him, was the engine of government, and the party leaders were responsible for insuring prosperity, and it was the duty of prosperous business to support the

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party with generous campaign contributions. Since he was a good organizer, absolutely loyal to his associates and to all "gentlemen's agreements," a shrewd judge of men with a genius for friendship, he moved ahead rapidly in practical politics, progressed naturally from the city to the state arena, and, from making McKinley Governor of Ohio in 1891, easily rose to the task of making him President of the United States in 1896.

In the process, he retired from money-making (January, 1895) and gave all his time to politics. He must have felt himself a bigger and abler man than McKinley, and doubtlessly he was ambitious at last to be President himself. He won his election to the United States Senate, set himself to master the problems of larger statesmanship, and successfully attacked the public prejudice against him as a corrupt political "boss" of "big business" affiliations. His plans were all scotched by the assassination of McKinley (1901) and Roosevelt's succession to the Presidency. He tried to hold out, as chairman of the National Republican Committee, against Roosevelt's determination to get the nomination for a second term safely pocketed in advance of the party convention, but he failed (1903). He fell ill again of typhoid fever (January, 1904), and this time it killed him.

## X. *In American Women*

WE have already attempted in our first chapter to indicate the explanation which the new psychology has to offer for some of the more striking traits of the American woman. She was originally a Puritan, and she suffered like the Puritan man with instinctive repressions that drove her to industry, so that she was above all a diligent and exhausted housekeeper—as the Puritan American mother, to-day, is apt to be. The early Puritan woman shared the man's conviction that prosperity was God's blessing on virtue, that ill luck and continued misfortune implied something very like heavenly disfavor; and to the ordinary American woman, to-day, as to the average man, worldly success has still an almost religious appeal. Since a good reputation was a strong support against the Puritan's inner apprehensions, public opinion came to have as miraculous a power over the American woman as over the American man, standardizing her; the foreign woman to-day, supported by varying class traditions, has much more patience with individual peculiarities than her American sister and develops idiosyncrasies that are more marked. The Puritan man, depending for salvation on his intelligent understanding of God's word, established in America a national belief in the magical power of education; the American woman has been gradually allowed to share in the benefits of that belief, but the freedom of her mind is still rigorously limited by Puritan ideals of propriety.

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The Puritan woman, able to seek prosperity in her husband's name only, and unable to maximate her ego except by extending it to include her husband and her children, produced, as we have said, that first great type of American woman, the "home-and-mother" type. She was an idealist, shut off from the world by the protection of her home, suffering with a feeling of injustice to herself in the terms which the man imposed on marriage, and making up for that injustice by demanding a high ideal of justice in her dream world. She did not have to compromise as much as the man compromised with the facts of human nature; she could condemn them, beyond appeal, as vices, and impose her verdict on her children in their early training, and give her sons and daughters her ideals as the weapons with which they were to attack the realities of the outside world. And it was in the matter of sex education, especially, that she gave her children these most ineffective weapons.

She commonly left her son to get his real education in sex from the "bad boys" of the neighborhood, and the education that he received was furtive, morbid, guilty against his mother's idealism, and haunted by remorse. Out of his remorse arose that adolescent male melancholia which is an almost universal American phenomenon. The remorse either drove in the direction of forgetting in excitement—particularly in the excitement of sowing wild oats—or it reversed toward an expiation of conscience by dedicating life to a high ideal, and so inspired some of the noblest, and many of the most useless, idealistic impulses of American youth.

The daughter received no real sex education at all. Sex was made wholly nasty and abhorrent to her, and all her instinctive thoughts of sex were marked for



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her as impure. When, in the course of her development, the unsatisfied instinct created its inevitable tension and emotion, that emotion, divorced from its biological purpose, was felt only as a craving for affection, a craving for romantic love. Its one permitted goal, of course, was courtship and marriage—but marriage divorced also from its natural purpose, as in the classic instance of the American girl, in Mrs. Edith Wharton's essay, who left her husband when she found that he had married chiefly in order to have children.

This ideal of romantic marriage is still the great illusion of the American woman. It produces that very common American type "the disappointed wife"—who finds the illusion shattered by reality—and it is probably the commonest basic cause of American divorce. The difficulty seems to lie in the fact that there is an essential difference between the nature of the sex instinct in man and in woman. In man it is a definite appetite that can be abruptly satiated; in woman it is a more diffuse receptivity that persists. Romantic love in a man is a phenomenon that accompanies courtship, but tends to disappear with the satisfaction of the sex instinct. Romantic love in the woman does not so end. It persists, as receptivity persists; and, persisting indefinitely in the modern childless marriage, it causes an extraordinary degree of feminine disappointment and unrest in American life.

During courtship this diffuse receptivity in the girl is converted, by force of conscience, into an æsthetic emotion which gets its satisfaction in flattery, attention, adulation, and so forth. Love is thought of as pure, but the real source of the emotion is considered something base and defiled. The emotion and the illusion continue after marriage, and the American

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wife demands from her husband an amount of attention and adulation that amazes the foreigner. She remains, none the less, dissatisfied, because the perceived emotion is no more satisfiable than the crude basis of its origin. In the earlier generations, woman was more or less secluded in her dissatisfaction, but the new woman in America has obtained a liberty that compares with man's. She is making the mistake of believing that her instinct can be satisfied as a man's is. Unless she finds some way to gain a conscious understanding and intelligent control of her sex emotions, they promise to drive her endlessly.

The home-and-mother type of American woman—in spite of this defect in the sex education that she gave her children—has been the great stabilizer of American society. If, in her idealism, she ignored certain biological elements in life, she ignored them with fair success: and, being herself successful, she taught her innocence to her children. The core of American society is formed of that innocence. It has made possible the typical American freedom of comradeship between the sexes in youth. It has permitted the sublimation of love upon the high plane of romantic courtship and devoted marriage. The disappointed wife, profoundly dispirited but upheld by her mother's example, has found capacity for self-sacrifice and strength to endure. In the mind of the American husband, the sanctity of marriage comes largely of treating the wife as the mother; and marital inconstancy is a sort of sacrilege, especially if the wife has borne children. The divorced woman, even though she be innocent, is still a symbol of impropriety in the typical American community. Such things as these are the strong foundations upon which the American social system has been securely built, and they

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are the work of the Puritan mother more than anyone else.

She is inveterately an idealist, as we have said, and her husband largely a pragmatist. The sons who imitate her become idealists and split away from the "prosperity type" of American, as we have already pointed out. But between the mother's influence and the father's, there have developed in the children every conceivable degree of variation from absolute feminine idealism to downright masculine practicality of the most crude and ruthless sort, and the traditional *vox populi* in America has acquired its characteristically unstable tone as of a boy's voice at adolescence continually breaking from bass to treble. Conspicuous among these variations is the college adolescent who tends to seek intellectual finality, as the phrase is. From the mother's point of view, he has developed a kind of infidelity, and from the father's a kind of failure of business sense. He has become the typical American intellectual. He is bound by conscience to his intellectual ideals as a sort of substitute religion. He may be a passive idealist or an active reformer; or he may practice whatever form of American art he can. He depends for support on patrimony, or on the market value of dreams; or he finds some crusading movement which can pay him for his allegiance. And there are many such movements to draft him, because the individual predatoriness of the Puritan prosperity type and his lack of a sense of social responsibility provide American life with the need of many social reforms.

In the early days of the nation, the home-and-mother type of woman was most valuable to the American man in his quest for prosperity, because it assured a supply of cheap labor for home-making; it was most

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satisfying to his craving for dominance, and for comfort and approval. Its success with him made it an American ideal. And, as an ideal, it became fixed by the imitation of the daughter on the one hand, and on the other by the unconscious demand of the son for a wife after his mother's model. He would co-operate only with the girl who was like his mother and who produced a home "like mother used to make." His family and the society of his day encouraged and supported him in his preference. To produce the qualities of this ideal became the aim of all home training and of all seminary education for girls. The qualities of the ideal set the notion of propriety for women, and propriety grew to be that form of feminine equipment which would best gain marital co-operation. In time, conscience itself became attached to propriety as a sort of feminine religion, so that, to-day, the typical American woman's fear of impropriety equals the typical American man's fear of business failure, and both fears are deeply founded on religious fear in the subconscious mind. Propriety has attained sanctity. It has extended itself to social conventions and to conventions in dress. The shame of being unfashionable, in the typical American woman, is now commonly indistinguishable from a pang of conscience. And the fear of impropriety has made her, when she revolts against her "man-made world," a much more prim and conventional rebel than her foreign sister.

It is illuminating to see where this revolt began. In the devoted Puritan wife and mother, there was a hidden trend of feeling, an unconscious trend, that was none the less powerful for being choked down. Her self-repressions, damming up her ego instincts in subconsciousness, filled in her a reservoir of secret



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hatred and revolt against marital injustice. Unpaid work, excessive child bearing, dependency and lack of property rights became symbols of this injustice, and they produced a more or less conscious reaction which was registered by her daughters, even when she suppressed it herself. It was registered, especially, by the daughter for whom the prospect of marriage had been made unbearable by the Puritan teaching that sex is sin; and that daughter developed into the second great type of American life, the woman who refused to co-operate with man in order to obtain success.

At first, one path only was open to her; she became the New England school-teacher. At once she was confronted by the obstacle of unequal pay and unequal opportunity. As a teacher she was given only one-quarter of a man's salary for the same sort of work. And she was still dependent on man's approval for success, just as her mother had been, because all avenues to prosperity were controlled by men. She did not have the wife's restraining loyalty to repress her anger at the injustice, and it became a conscious rancor. She revolted. She revolted intellectually, but she remained conventional. The ideal of propriety was particularly urgent in her because the danger of infamy to an unmarried woman was greater than to a married one; and in her teaching she emphasized propriety as a worthy goal. In that she was typically American and strikingly different from the continental woman in revolt.

The early temperance movement in America enlisted both the mother who wished to reform man and the unmarried woman who wished to retaliate on him. The failure of the temperance movement and of the campaign for equal pay awakened the American woman to the cause of that failure—which was her

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lack of the vote. All her free energies then went into the struggle for the franchise. It was a struggle for which she had been well trained, because the franchise could come to her as a gift from the enfranchised man, and the life of the average American woman had been spent in obtaining whatever she wanted in the world from the man who stood between her and the difficult facts of competitive existence. She obtained the franchise. It is nothing in itself, but it is the key that opens the doors to social reforms and to equal pay. It will be used by the woman who wishes to apply her sheltered ideals to the world of reality and by the woman who wishes to use the path of prosperity to escape from psychic anxiety. And they will make a notable revolution in American affairs. They have already helped to make one by their support of prohibition.

In the early days of the nation, then, the outstanding types of American women were these that we have noted. But with the advent of prosperity, though it did not greatly alter the life of the American man, there came a great change in the life of the mass of American women. Much of the wife's earlier work in the home was taken over by machine industry outside the home; the remainder was largely withdrawn from her and her daughters by the prosperous man's desire to relieve them of labor and to use their idleness as the honorific indication of his success. The leisured woman's first impulse was toward ornamental intellectuality in the shape of culture, in imitation of the English aristocratic ideal. This was especially true in New England, where the type appeared as the "blue-stocking" of the days before the Civil War, and still exists. The ideal was prevented from becoming national, because the American young man,

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absorbed in the pursuit of material success, found the intellectuality of the blue-stockings an invidious reproach to his own lack of ornamental culture; and he shunned her. Her intellectuality barred her from the marital co-operation that was still her easiest avenue to success in life, and intellectuality as an ideal of feminine propriety was gradually driven out of fashion. Parents discouraged it. The humorists ridiculed it. The advocates of higher education for women were put on the defensive to prove that intellectuality was not a bar to marriage, and the intellectual young woman in America to-day usually conceals her attainments from the marriageable young man.

Instead of ornamental culture for women, another form of honorific knowledge became the national ambition. That was the acquiring of what you might call "caste marks." The prosperous young man advanced so fast that he could always look above his social station for a wife. His employer's daughter became his ideal. She was "a thoroughbred" to him. She had "class." His preference for her type began to react on girls of his own social station and they quickly developed marks of caste in accordance with his taste. They began to imitate the clothes and manners of the leisure class, to play the same games, to dance the same dances, to cultivate the same social formalities. A knowledge of certain high-caste recreations became more important than education. Every American community set up its country club, as naturally as in the earlier days it had built its school-house. The circumstances under which golf is played—on the outskirts of the city, with the necessary addition of an automobile generally—made it especially honorific; and it is at present the national American game of the well-to-do and their caste imitators. A

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few easy forms of ornamental culture acquired merit, as, for instance, music and the opera, now popularized by the phonograph and the reproducing piano; but, for the most part, intellectual adornment of the old-fashioned sort decayed. The education of the American woman in caste manners was undertaken by the popular magazine and by the woman's page in the daily newspaper. The famous "Don'ts for Girls" were largely lessons in caste manners; and the woman's magazines devoted themselves especially to instructing her in the ritual of caste dress, caste manners, caste habits in home decoration and the service of meals, caste games, sports, hobbies, manias, and pursuits. Recently, this sort of education has been greatly aided by the movie and its depiction of the sort of high life that a modest but aspiring income is thrilled to see. The result is a standardization of the American young girl in clothes, interests, and conversation, beyond anything that the world has ever known.

While such imitations of the employer's daughter were progressing in popularity, that daughter was herself advanced in caste acquirement by the aspirations of her father. He was proud to have a girl who looked like a thoroughbred. She was made what the sociologists call a "recipient of adulatory wealth." She developed into the type of the spoiled child of American prosperity. The female seminary of earlier days was supplanted by the fashionable finishing school; and after the finishing school, a course of European travel perfected her education in acquiring caste marks. For a time, the crown and summit of her caste ambition was marriage with a European nobleman, but this exaggeration injured the cult because it antagonized the successful American young man. Moreover, the foreign marriage was rarely happy. The Ameri-



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can leisure-class girl had become an expert in dominating her father, and she felt the necessity of reducing her husband to a similar state of what you might call affectionate vassalage. For this status, neither tradition nor home training had prepared the European man. Conflict followed, and the husband did not yield. Warnings were set up against the foreign marriage, and it became an American maxim that the American men made "the best husbands in the world." They are conceded to be not such gallant lovers as the foreign aristocrat, nor so decoratively intellectual, nor so highly mannered; but they have been better trained in the marital traditions of the spoiled child of wealth, and she can manage them more smoothly.

Meanwhile another influence had been affecting the typical American girl. While she was studying caste as a new form of propriety, her brother was being emancipated from his Puritan conventions in college and in the big cities. The traditional wildness of college boys became an ambition in him. He developed a sort of Oriental phantasy, formed out of fairy tales and the *Arabian Nights* of his boyhood, but supported, as a conscious ideal, on the philosophy of Omar Khayyám. That phantasy realized itself in the pursuit of what might be called "the chorus-girl illusion." It is a very popular illusion to-day. It has overthrown the subconscious image of the mother (as a model for the desired wife) in the minds of many American young men who have had the means to indulge the more extravagant impulses of adolescent excitement. With some of these youths, the defeat of the mother has been only temporary; they have returned to the mother image in selecting a wife. But many prosperous American business men married in the chorus-girl illusion, and the competition of the

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type has been sufficiently strong to make the leisure-class girl modify her caste marks. She has been influenced, too, by the stylish "office wife" with whom a certain "prosperity type" of American business man attempts to realize the Oriental phantasy of his adolescence. In competition with the show-girl and the stylish stenographer who has adopted the use of the show-girl's lip stick, the leisure-class girl has discovered that the more nearly she imitates these dashing rivals, the more popular she is with the young man of to-day. Her imitation has produced that latest type of American girl, "the wise kid," whose clothes and conversation so appal her elders. She is competing successfully with her rivals in the Oriental phantasy of her adolescent lover, but both she and the young man have overlooked the fact that his Omar Khayyám ideal has no practical relation to the realities of life and marriage. That is something which they both discover when he, as her husband, tries to put her back into the mold of the conventional mother.

She has been assisted in her revolt against Puritan conventions by the war against Germany, which changed the world for the American woman much more than it did for the man. One got a very curious indication of that fact in the prevailing mode of woman's dress. Since early Puritan days eminent propriety had required her to hide her legs. The needs of war work, of motor-corps service and such, broke the taboo, because the long skirt impeded her efficiency. She clung to her new freedom in dress despite all the denunciations of outraged convention. It was the symbol of her escape from male domination—an escape which even children, by imitation, were making from parental control. The woman saw the war as the final blunder in man's government of the world, just as the adoles-

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cent saw it as the product of the stupidity of his elders. The woman's hatred of war came as a powerful reinforcement of her subconscious hatred of her master. The mother had to give up her habit of protecting her children and send them out to die. The young girl sent her lover. The old dogmas of propriety were upset by the fact that all conduct was proper toward those doomed to death. The sheltered woman who had relied upon man to protect her and her children—in return for the self-submission of which propriety was the symbol—found the reliance misplaced and the propriety as antiquated as the long skirt. She and her daughters are now facing a new life, with a new sense of freedom, prepared to compete with man, skeptical of his wisdom in running the world, and amused to discover the power over him which she has obtained by accentuating her sex in her costume. The "wise kid" is temporarily running amuck. She is attempting to emulate her Omar Khayyám young man in a sexual freedom that is causing serious scandal. In its origin, probably, this revolt is largely an egoistic gesture in her, but it is followed by a destructive remorse rising from her Puritan subconsciousness, and her present condition is rather appalling.

These are perhaps somewhat superficial trends. They are the more showy aspects of the psychology of the modern American woman, and they fill a disproportionate amount of space in the literature and the newspaper discussion of the day. Below such surface phases are basic tendencies less obvious and more important.

The intellectual woman of the leisure class—no longer a mere blue-stocking, although she still remains within the propriety group—has been released by the suffrage campaign into public activities, and

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she comes to these with an idealism that has reached the high plane of a religion of abstract justice. She has commonly no interest in marriage and no place in industry, so that she is free to use all her energies in the service of those whom she finds suffering from the injustices and oppressions of the modern social system. She is herself suffering from instinctive repressions, which set her subconscious mind in a tone of anger and revolt. She relieves her psychic mood by projecting it upon the obstacles to her desired reforms, and at the same time she satisfies her religious impulse by worshipping and obeying an abstract principle. She is going to interfere seriously with the devices by which the prosperity type of American has exploited women and the weaker sorts of men.

It is the competing woman in industry, however, who is likely to give him the most serious turn. Her mind can outwit his if she learns to take human nature and the world as they are, to develop tolerance and patience, and—until she devises better means—to use the machinery of exploitation and the politics of expediency and opportunism as the man uses them. If she can make marriage a partnership in property rights, with the property divided according to ability, it will follow that her daughter may begin life as a competing woman with inherited capital; son and daughter would then have parallel careers and economic conditions would soon change. At present, the daughter is brought up to look to approval as a goal, the son to seek prosperity. For him, the dollar is the evidence of success, but praise is the coin in which she feels paid. She has been trained to please successively father, brother, suitor, and husband, who show their approval in terms of support; and not to please them depresses her profoundly. As a worker, consequently,



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she reacts badly to disapproval; she develops excessive loyalty and is exploited by her employer; or she uses her salary to win approval at home or elsewhere, instead of investing it. These habits are the consequence of her training in dependence, and they hamper her.

More difficult for her to overcome is the conscience and idealization involved in her instinct of love. It is her great virtue; and, in competition with man it is her great handicap. Her love is a force not always within her control. Once it has become fixed on a man, she may find herself enduring all kinds of injustice, but unable to face the loss of her love object. A man, with his sex instinct satisfied, easily turns to his ambition; and although he suffers much from the loss of an unsatisfied sex object, he readily leaves a wife. The woman continues to love her husband as she loved her sweetheart. It remains to be seen whether a conscious understanding of her instinctive impulses will ever give her a working control of them.

To the intellectual woman in revolt, and the competing woman in industry, the suffrage movement has now added the reforming mother who seeks to use her vote against the grown-up "bad boys" of her husband's world. Her success with prohibition has been a great encouragement to her. She is going to interfere implacably with what William James has called her husband's "moral holidays." She has yet to learn how large an element of the bad boy there is in all men, and how useless is a repressive law or any sort of censorship in regenerating them. If she is going to insist on her ideals, she will first have to face the facts of human nature as it is and of the world as it is. She will have to educate her children in these facts. In the matter of sex education, particularly, she will have to teach them how to control an instinct which now

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betrays them because they have no intelligent understanding of it. But if she can acquire a mastery of the psychology of the instinctive mind, and apply her knowledge in the education of her children, she can do almost anything she pleases with American life according to the degree and limits of her wisdom.

## XI. *In Julia Ward Howe*

IT is not easy to find, on record, a good laboratory specimen of the home-and-mother type of American woman—for who is to make the record? She cannot write it herself; it is the genius of her life that she should be mute, self-suppressed, self-sacrificed and only distinguished in her own eyes by the success of her husband or her children. Her family, who should know her best, are unable to write her record for her, because they are the persons from whom she has necessarily lived most hidden, in her devoted immolation of herself. She cannot attract biographers by becoming a successful personality in her own right; they can give us only glimpses of her, as the wife or mother of an illustrious sitter, in the background of the portrait; and although she has always been the most influential person in America, you will fail to find any chronicle of her “small bear” among the lives of America’s famous citizens.

Julia Ward Howe is as nearly a perfect specimen as biography is likely to preserve, although, at first glance, she is not a specimen at all. From her early twenties she was “a blue-stocking”; she became a conspicuous poetess, and she crowned her literary career with her famous “Battle Hymn of the Republic” that made her a national voice of patriotism and of victory by divine right. She was an abolitionist in the days before the Civil War. She was one of the pioneers in the campaign for woman suffrage. She was presi-

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dent of the Society for the Advancement of American Women, headed the Federation of Women's Clubs, inaugurated the celebration of Mother's Day, and figured in her later years as a sort of dowager queen of the whole woman's revolt in America. It is as if she had come inevitably into public life as a born opponent of social injustice and a natural champion of the oppressed.

Yet after her eightieth birthday—and its celebration with speeches and dinners and public meetings and memorial numbers of women's journals—she wrote in her diary: "I can only say that I do not think of myself as the speakers think of me. Too deeply do I regret my seasons of rebellion and my shortcomings in many duties." And if you look for some record of her dreams (since in dreams the intelligence is off duty and the subconscious mind is free to reveal the truth about itself) you will find her, at the age of seventy-eight, noting this dream of her father: "My father came in and said to me that he wished to speak to Miss Julia alone. I trembled, as I so often did, lest I was about to receive some well-merited rebuke. He said that he wished my sister and me to stay at home more." Consequently, it would appear that even in her applauded old age she felt a childish guilt against her father's ideals because of her public activities. Moreover, it was late in life that she joined the women's suffrage movement, after years of indifference to it. When she first became active in a woman's club, she was all for the privacy of club life and fought to make it merely a larger home life with "the defences and immunities of home." And her "Battle Hymn of the Republic," written by her almost automatically in a state between waking and sleeping, contains no mention of the Republic, of patriotism, of her country,



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or of the Union for which the nation was battling, but reads like a true Hebraic hymn that is concerned only with the struggle between God and the contemners of God.

In fact, as soon as you look below the surface of Mrs. Howe's character, it becomes evident that she was never a true rebel and never basically the sort of woman you would expect to find prominent in public affairs. She was naturally a devoted daughter, a help-mate after the old Puritan model, a real home-and-mother woman. So that it is interesting and important to see why she conformed and why she revolted, wherein she remained true to her type and by what process she was moved to deviate from it. And this is interesting and important because the American social system has been based for generations upon the submissive claustration of the home-keeping mother; and her revolt and her entrance into public activities mark a startling change and upheaval in the root and foundations of American life.

Julia Ward Howe was born (May, 1819) of wealthy and distinguished parents in New York City, and she was bred in a conviction of aristocracy that must have firmly supported her personality. She had notable ancestors on both sides of the house, and she felt them as a strength in her. (Once, in her later years, at a public meeting where a speaker deplored the vice and barbarism of the "good old times" and spoke of feeling "bowed down beneath the burden of the sins of his ancestors," she jumped to her feet and protested: "Mr. So-and-so is bowed down by the sins of his ancestors. I wish to say that all my life I have been buoyed up and lifted on by the remembrance of the virtues of mine." And her daughters relate the incident as "characteristic of her.") Her mother,

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Julia Cutler Ward, was a poetess of sufficient distinction to have one of her poems included in Griswold's "Female Poets of America." Her father, Samuel Ward, was a well-to-do New York banker, and she lived her childhood in a "region of high fashion," in a house that boasted the first private picture gallery built in New York. In her infancy, she gathered such a good opinion of herself from the household comment that when she first saw herself in the mirror she looked at herself, disappointed, and said "Is *that* all!" She was conspicuous among her five brothers and sisters by being red haired. And she was her father's favorite. Her young ego must have unconsciously based itself very firmly in these distinctions and superiorities, as well as in the physical vitality that carried her to the age of ninety-one. Otherwise, the training in repression and female inferiority that she received would have weakened her into silent self-subjection, as it usually weakened the women of her day.

That training was narrow and cloistered and Puritanic to a point that is now almost incredible. Her mother died at the age of twenty-seven, having borne seven children of whom Julia was the eldest living, then five and a half years old. The mother was "almost literally prayed to death," and after the mother's death the father's "views of religious duty became more stringent" than ever. He read family prayers night and morning. With him, Sunday observance began, Puritanically, on Saturday evening. "The early days of my youth," she wrote in her *Reminiscences*, "were passed in the seclusion not only of home life, but of a home most carefully and jealously guarded from all that might be represented in the orthodox trinity of evil, the world, the flesh, and the devil." She was

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allowed no playmates outside of the family connection, and their play was indoor play. "Julia and her sisters sometimes went for a drive in pleasant weather," in the family chariot; "they rarely went out on foot." Her father, she says, "dreaded for his children the dissipations of fashionable society and even the risk of general intercourse with the unsanctified many." Her reading, of course, was strictly censored. Even as a girl of nineteen, "Shelley was forbidden," Byron was "allowed only in small and carefully selected doses," and Goethe's *Faust* was "a wicked book." The father's ideas of propriety may be judged from an incident of her childhood. "Little Julia, weary with long riding in the family coach, suffering her knees to drop apart childwise," was reproved by him with, "My daughter, if you cannot sit like a lady, we will stop at the next tailor's and have you measured for a pair of pantaloons." And at table, when she once remarked that the cheese was "strong," he replied, censoriously, "It is no more so than the expression, miss!"

At first, the effects of this sort of training were all that piety could hope. At the age of eight she wrote to a young cousin, ill with some childish ailment: "I hear with regret that you are sick, and it is as necessary as ever that you should trust in God; love him, dear Henry, and you will see Death approaching with joy." At twelve, she dedicated a manuscript volume of poems to her father, warning him not to "expect to find in these juvenile productions the delicacy and grace which pervaded the writings of that dear parent who is now in glory." And the titles of the poems included "All things shall pass away," "We return no more," "To an infant's departing spirit," "My Heavenly Home," etc. At fifteen, she composed a

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verse called "Vain Regrets," with the subtitle, "Written on looking over a diary kept while I was under serious impressions"; and a stanza reads:

"Oh! Happy days, gone, never to return  
At which fond memory will ever burn,  
Oh! Joyous hours, with peace and gladness blest,  
When hope and joy dwelt in this careworn breast."

It is a fair sample of the sort of poetry that the Puritan tradition produced in America at that period—even in a child of fifteen.

She began to have attacks of "morbid melancholy, which threatened to upset my health," as she says; but she describes the melancholy as a "reaction" from the excessive pleasure which she took in music: and in her *Reminiscences* she warns against the "overpowering response" which sensitive "youthful nerves" often make "to the appeals of music"—so overpowering a response "that it will sometimes so disturb the mental equilibrium of the hearer as to induce in him a listless melancholy, or worse still, an unreasoning and unreasonable discontent." It is well to notice, however, that she had fallen in love with a young assistant to her music teacher, at this time; he was "summarily dismissed in consequence"; and her melancholy and her discontent may have been due less to the appeal of the music than to the frustration of the instinctive appeal of the musician. Certainly, a revolt against her father now began to show in daydreams. "I seemed to myself," she says, "like a young damsel of olden times, shut up within an enchanted castle. And I must say that my dear father, with all his noble generosity and overweening affection, sometimes appeared to me as a jailer." Her training and her love for her



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jailer kept the revolt choked down. She suddenly became studious, driven, probably, by the necessity of occupying her thoughts so as to exclude compulsive daydreams, and by the desire to acquire knowledge as a form of power in order to support herself against a feeling of dominated feminine inferiority. "Until that time," she writes, "a certain overromantic and imaginative turn of mind had interfered much with the progress of my studies. I indulged in daydreams which appeared far higher in tone than the humdrum of my school recitations. When these"—the school recitations—"were at an end, I began to feel the necessity of more strenuous application and at once arranged for myself hours of study." And to enforce the determination to study, significantly enough, "she had herself securely tied to her armchair, giving orders that she was on no account to be set free before the appointed hour."

This is a very brief summary of her early girlhood, but concealed in it there is a complete set of unconscious "action patterns" upon which she lived her whole life thereafter. These recur and reappear again and again, more and more clearly, in the incidents that followed. And they are, in many instances, typical of the great mass of normal American women.

Her ego, well established by her father's pride in her, had been checked by piety and by filial respect; but the war between the impulse to self-assertion and the instinct of affection had begun, and it was likely that whenever her affection might be aroused in the future a tendency to revolt would be started also. Since the attitude of the child toward the parent usually determines the subsequent attitude toward all other authority, it was probable that she would develop into a reforming conformist who obeyed the law

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and sought to change it; and in this she was typical of her day and unlike the modern American youths who have been less suppressed by their parents and who feel no need of reforming either church or government because they feel no compulsion to obey authority in either. Along with her feeling of egoistic aristocracy, there was a strain of feminine inferiority developed by the contrast between her father's tyranny over her and the greater freedom that he allowed her brothers; and this feeling of inferiority was driving her to seek a compensation in intellectual attainment; but the standard of culture in her closed home did not include any departments of knowledge that could handle unpleasant aspects of reality, weaken faith, or affect propriety.

Whatever revolt she might make in later life, she would be held within the limits of conventional propriety by her early training; and indeed it was her eminent respectability as a wife and mother that recommended her to the suffrage movement as a presentable leader. As a result of her long subjection to her father, she would never escape that feeling of subconscious guilt in revolting which showed so clearly in her dream that her father wished her "to stay at home more." "During the first two thirds of my life," she has written, "I looked to the masculine ideal of character as the only true one. I sought its inspiration and referred my merits and demerits to its judicial verdict." And this was generally true of the American women of that day as it is true of the home-and-mother class of American women still. She would remain always religious in her subconscious mind, and a pious emotion would continue to inspire most of her poetry. Whenever she attempted to occupy herself with study—in order to maximate her ego and escape the com-

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pulsive thoughts that came of repressed instincts in revolt—she would turn to the ornamental “accomplishments” of honorific culture, and busy herself with music, literature, and languages, after the manner of the typical American intellectual under the Puritan tradition. And, indeed, she had “no gift” for mathematics; to the end of her life, her knowledge of science, she used to say, “was limited to the fact that four quarts made a gallon.”

Moreover, from even this brief record of her girlhood, one can easily foresee the circumstances under which she would be most likely to marry. Her devotion to her father was so deep that she would probably transfer it to an elderly suitor who could act as a surrogate for the father, as the psychologists say. But there was in the background of her mind a picture of herself as an imprisoned damsel, in an enchanted castle, with her father as the jailer; and her suitor, if he was to be acceptable, would have to arrive with a romantic air of being a knight riding to the rescue. Furthermore, her earliest recollections contained the poetical and heroic figure of a young physician who had once saved her father's life, and tended her mother devotedly in her last illness, and read poems and stories to the child Julia, as “an inmate of our house soon after my mother's death.” By virtue of these subconscious influences, it was likely that a physician, an elderly physician, and especially an elderly physician of a romantic reputation and a chivalrous past, would prove irresistible to her. It was also likely that, having married him, she would begin her married life in a state of dutiful subjection and then transfer to him the mood of stifled revolt in which she had loved her father.

At any rate, that is what happened. At nineteen,

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a poetess, a beauty, a daughter of wealth and culture, she had shoals of suitors. "Her masters, old and young, fell in love with her as a matter of course. Gilded youth and sober middle-aged fared no better; her girlhood passed to the sound of sighing." She and her two sisters were known as "The Three Graces of Bond Street." The other two "had admirers," her daughters quote an intimate friend as saying, "but when the men saw your mother they just *flopped*." She felt for her suitors "a tender and compassionate sympathy," we are told. "She could not love them, she would not marry them, but she was sorry for them, and—it must be admitted—she liked to be adored. So she sang duets with one, read German with another, Anglo-Saxon with a third." They called her "Diva."

Under the influence of their adulation, she attempted some small rebellions against her father's control, but with no success. She dared to invite a number of guests to a formal party at her father's house, having obtained his consent on the false pretense of receiving "a few friends," but she passed the evening "possessed with terror," thinking of "nothing but her father's displeasure"; and when the party was over and she went to ask his forgiveness, she was unable to speak. He forgave her, but "the matter was never mentioned again." Among the papers which she preserved from that period of her life, there is a letter from her father to a suitor, declaring that Mr. Ward, "desires not to conceal from the Rev. Mr. — the deliberate and dispassionate opinion that a gentleman whose sacred office commands ready access to his roof might well have ascertained the views of a widow'd Father on a subject so involving the happiness of his child."

The father died in 1839, when she was twenty years old, but his image remained to rule in the background



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of her mind throughout her life. Writing her *Reminiscences*, when she was nearly eighty, she said of his death: "I cannot, even now, bear to dwell upon the desolate hush which fell upon our house when its stately head lay, silent and cold, in the midst of weeping friends and children." And "she never failed to record his birthday in her diary, with some word of tender remembrance."

The first consequence of the loss of her beloved jailer was "a season of depression and melancholy" complicated by remorse in the form of "a sense of my ingratitude for the many comforts and advantages which his affection had secured for me." She redoubled her piety, attended the meetings of "a great Calvinistic revival," allowed the family only cold meat on Sunday, and, being away on a visit, wrote to her sisters: "Believe me, it is better to set aside, untasted, the cup of human enjoyment, than to drink it to the bitter dregs, and then seek for something better which may not be granted to us."

But the impulse of subconscious revolt would not be denied. It began to affect her religion. She broke off a "semi-engagement" to marry a young clergyman; and then, after reading "Paradise Lost," she found herself unable to accept Milton's idea of "eternal evil, subjugated, indeed, by God, but never conquered"; and she "threw away," as she says, "once and forever, the thought of the terrible hell which till then had always formed part of my belief," as it had formed part of her father's. She began to read what books she pleased, and she found this freedom "half delightful, half alarming." She corresponded with Margaret Fuller, met Ralph Waldo Emerson, and—"Don't go into hysterics," she begs her sisters—she heard Doctor Channing preach.

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The period of mourning for her father being over, she began "a season of visiting, dancing, and all manner of gayeties." "If this state of things had continued," she writes, "I should probably have remained a frequenter of fashionable society, a musical amateur, a dilettante in literature." But this state of things could not continue. Her father's effect on her prevented it. After three years of freedom she met a physician who was an elderly physician and an elderly physician of a romantic reputation as a crusading cavalier. Moreover, his first name was Samuel, as her father's had been. She was unable to resist such a triple incarnation of the knight of her daydreams, the heroic doctor, and the beloved father image. She married him—and took a new jailer.

He was a Boston doctor, Samuel Gridley Howe, who, like Byron, had gone in his youth to aid the Greeks in their war of independence. As surgeon-in-chief to the Greek army, he had been made a Knight of St. George by the king of Greece, and his friends called him "The Chevalier." They "saw in him a good knight without fear and without reproach," and they talked of him in those terms to Julia Ward when she was visiting near Boston in 1842. He was at the head of the Perkins Institute for the Blind, and he "was known throughout the civilized world as the man who had first taught language to a blind deaf mute, Laura Bridgman." Miss Ward, "deeply interested" by her friends' account of him, allowed two of them to drive her to the Perkins Institution. Doctor Howe happened to be absent from his work of rescuing the prisoners in that dungeon of the blind, but while his visitors were waiting for him, one of them, looking out a window, cried, "Oh! here comes Howe on his black horse!" And the repressed damsel looked out the win-

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dow of her enchanted castle, and saw her knight. "I looked out also," she writes, "and beheld a noble rider on a noble steed."

It was evidently a case of love at first sight. He was forty-one years old and she was twenty-two. He followed her to New York, and a diarist of the time gives this picture of them together: "Walked down Broadway with all the fashion, and met the pretty blue-socking, Miss Julia Ward, with her admirer, Dr. Howe, just home from Europe. She had on a blue satin cloak and a white muslin dress. I looked to see if she had on blue stockings, but I think not. I suspect that her stockings were pink, and she wore low slippers. They say she dreams in Italian and quotes French verses. She sang very prettily at a party last evening, and accompanied herself on the piano."

That was the outward aspect of the situation; she was the conquering "Diva" and he was her enslaved "admirer." But the inner truth was otherwise. "The Chevalier says truly," she wrote her brother after her engagement, "I am the captive of his bow and spear. . . . I am perfectly satisfied to sacrifice to one so noble and earnest the daydreams of my youth. He will make life more beautiful to me than a dream." And again, "The Chevalier seems determined to have his own way, but the Chevalier's way will be a very charming way, and is, henceforth, to be mine."

It was the proper tone of submission for a bride in those days, and if she could have persisted in it she might have been a perfect specimen of the home-and-mother type of American woman. But her ego was too strong to be made subservient to the masterful Chevalier, even; and she had a strain of latent revolt involved in her instinctive affections. There began in her a long conflict and dissatisfaction that forced

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her out, at last, as a recognized leader of the woman's rebellion.

Conflict showed, at once, on her honeymoon, as a humorous attitude toward her husband, and she became another example of how the Puritan American will use humor to release a hidden struggle against jailers and injustices and repressive institutions which the humorist is unconsciously restrained from attacking openly. Julia Ward had never been disrespectful enough toward her father to be humorous about him. She was less in awe of her husband, but her affection for him was strong enough to keep her to the acceptable forms of humor in resisting complete subjugation. Humor, however, did not appeal to him, and her high spirits alternated with moods of melancholy and self-disparagement and despair. "Diva," the banker's daughter, had not been trained as a housekeeper, and her ignorance of her duties as a wife and mother overwhelmed her. She took refuge again in study, as she had during her girlhood, and in the production of verse.

The psychology of her revolt is easily traced, step by step, in the edited letters which her daughters have published in their *Julia Ward Howe*. When she and her husband went abroad on their honeymoon, accompanied by her sister Annie, she wrote from London: "Annie and I are little people here—we are too young (?) to be noticed—we are very demure, and we have learned humility. Chev receives a great deal of attention, ladies press forward to look at him, roll up their eyes, and exclaim 'Oh, he is such a winner!' I do not like that the pretty women should pay him compliments—it will turn his little head!" (1843). The Chevalier was known abroad; she was not. He was received by Dickens, Rogers, Sydney Smith, Carlyle,



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Moore, Landseer, Miss Edgeworth, Wordsworth, and all the rest; she met them only as Doctor Howe's young wife. Her comments on some of them were caustic. ("My husband," she explains in parenthesis, "allows me to swear once a week.") On their return to America, they went to live in "the Doctor's wing" of the hospital for the blind, and the atmosphere was depressing. "The romance of charity," she wrote in her *Reminiscences*, "interests the public. Its laborious details and duties repel and weary the many, and find fitting ministers only in a few spirits of rare and untiring benevolence." She did not find that spirit in herself. She wrote a humorous verse of satiric nonsense about one of the doctor's blind patients, and she was "grieved to see how much he seemed pained at my frivolity." In a poem of the period, called "A Rough Sketch" of Doctor Howe, she deplored the fact that "the gods" had not given him, in his wife, "a woman's heart to match with his in high resolve and hardihood." At the same time she wrote to her sister Annie: "You are accountable to man for the performance of the duties which affect his welfare and being—for those which concern your own soul, you are accountable to God alone. A man, though with twenty surplices on his back and twenty prayer-books in his hand, can no more condemn than he can save you" (1844). "Sumner has been dining with us, and he and Chev have been pitying unmarried women. Oh, my dear friends, thought I, if you could only have one baby, you would change your tune" (1845). In the nursery, she sang to her infant:

"Rero, rero, riddlety, rad,  
This morning my baby caught sight of her Dad,  
Quoth she, 'Oh, Daddy, where have you been?'  
'With Mann and Sumner a-putting down sin!'"

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The care of her household and her children imprisoned her in a round of small duties. "I have plenty of occupation for my fingers. My heart will be much taken up with my babies. As for my soul, that part of me which believes and thinks and imagines, I shall leave it alone till the next world, for I see it has little to do in this" (1846). "My thoughts grow daily more and more commonplace." "I have quite lost the power of contributing to the amusement of others."

"Woman, being of all critters the darn'dest,  
Is made to suffer the consarn'dest."

By the autumn of 1846, she was in such a depressed condition of health and spirits that Doctor Howe decided they should move to a Boston hotel for the winter. Here music and friends and social success revived her. "I have been singing," she writes her sister, "and writing poetry, so you may know I have been happy. Alas! am I not a selfish creature to prize these enjoyments as I do, above *almost* everything else in the world" (1846). Back at the hospital for the blind, she took refuge in study. "I shall try to pursue my studies as I have through this last year, for I am good for nothing without them" (1847). "Never, since my youth, have I lived so much in reading and writing." She disliked Boston. "I cannot swim about in this frozen ocean of Boston life in search of friends. I feel as if I had struggled enough with it, as if I could now fold my arms and go down" (1853). Passing the Charitable Eye and Ear Infirmary in Charles Street, she said, "Oh, I did not know there was a charitable eye or ear in Boston!" She writes her sister, humorously: "They are playing at the Boston Museum a piece, probably a farce, called 'A Blighted

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Being.' When I see the handbills posted up in the street it is like reading one's own name" (1855).

It was sometime during these years that Doctor Howe interfered with her religion in a manner very like her father's, for reasons of propriety as conventional as her father's, and in words almost as dictatorial as his. She had met Theodore Parker in Rome on her honeymoon, and he had baptized her first child. She had heard him speak for the equality of women in education and opportunity, and she had found in his opinions a support for her inner revolt. She and her husband had attended his church in Boston for years, and he had delighted her by quoting some of her verses in a Christmas sermon. They had become intimate friends; she loved to "make fun" with him in verse, and he wrote Latin epigrams on Doctor Howe. Upon this intimacy Doctor Howe suddenly imposed the request that she must leave Parker's congregation, and for the following reasons: "The children [our two oldest girls] are now of an age at which they should receive impressions of reverence. They should, therefore, see nothing which militates against that feeling. At Parker's meetings individuals read the newspapers before the exercises begin. A good many persons come in after the prayer, and some go out before the conclusion of the sermon. These irregularities offend my sense of decorum and appear undesirable in the religious education of my family."

He called it "my" family, not "our" family. She gave up Parker's church, but it was, as she wrote in her *Reminiscences*, "a grievous thing to comply with my husband's wishes in this matter." It must have greatly increased the load of depression and the fever of repressed revolt.

She had become an abolitionist, as her husband was.

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And she made a profound psychological observation, later in life, when she pointed out that transcendentalism and abolitionism were twins. "In the transcendentalists, the enthusiasm of emancipated thought was paramount, while the abolitionists followed the vision of emancipated humanity." Both movements were probably inspired by the same revolt of the Puritan instincts against tyrannical repression. Her "Battle Hymn of the Republic" came directly from such a revolt. It was written, as she puts it, in reply to "something" which "seemed to say to me, 'You would be glad to serve, but you cannot help anyone; you have nothing to give and there is nothing for you to do.'" She dreamed it rather than wrote it, when she was in Washington in the autumn of 1861 with her husband, who was a member of the government's Sanitary Commission. After a review of troops near Washington, her carriage was stopped by returning soldiers who marched past her singing "John Brown's body." A companion suggested that she ought to write "some good words for that stirring tune." Next morning, she woke at dawn, in her hotel room, with the first line of the poem in her mind. "She lay perfectly still. Line by line, stanza by stanza, the lines came sweeping on with the rhythm of marching feet." When the last line had come, she sprang out of bed, scribbled the poem blindly on some hotel notepaper, and went back to sleep. In the morning, though she remembered the incident, she could not recall a word of the poem until she read it in the almost illegible scrawl that she had made in the half light.

She had written a patriotic song in which there is about as much patriotism as there is in "Onward, Christian Soldiers." God was marching against evil and oppression, and he was the Hebraic God of her



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childhood, the God of wrath and battles and the lightning of the sword. Supported by him, "the hero born of woman" was to crush the serpent with his heel. The enemy were the "contemners of God." "As he died to make men holy, let us die to make men free." It is the true Puritan expression of an imprisoned ego, voicing itself in terms of religion.

Although the poem afterward became so popular, it caused no stir at the time of its publication. None of her poetry had. She had been writing newspaper correspondence and doing magazine work, but these self-expressions had not satisfied her. "It was borne in upon me," she says, "that I had much to say to my day and generation which could not and should not be communicated in rhyme, or even in rhythm." She wished to speak, to lecture, to read essays. She gave herself up anew to study—to escape the unbearable grief of the death of an infant son—and prepared an essay on Religion, which she read from the pulpit of a Boston Unitarian Church (1864). She followed this with the preparation of a series of lectures on Religion which she wished to read in Washington. Her husband was opposed to any such "public appearance" for a woman. So was his friend Charles Sumner. Theodore Parker, however, had encouraged her to it, long before, and her own subconscious impulse had now become irresistible. She disobeyed her husband and set out to read her lectures "with a resolute, not a sanguine, heart," as she wrote in her diary. "I have no one to stand for me. . . . I go in obedience to a deep and strong impulse which I do not understand nor explain, but whose bidding I cannot neglect. The satisfaction of having obeyed this interior guide is all that keeps me up" (1864).

The impulse seems to have been largely egotistic

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and its satisfaction failed to stand against her husband's continued disapproval. "Did not Chev so discourage it, I should feel bound to give these lectures publicly, being as they are a work for the public. I do not as yet decide what to do with them" (1864). "I was so hopeful and happy in writing my essays and thought they should open such a vista of usefulness to me and of good to others. But the opposition of my family has made it almost impossible for me to make the use intended of them" (1866). "The bitter opposition of my family renders this service"—of helping the public with her essays—"a very difficult and painful one for me. I do not, therefore, seek occasions of performing it, not being quite clear as to the extent to which they ought to limit my efficiency" (1866). At the same time, her literary affairs were "in a very confused state," as she wrote. She had "no market." A book of poems failed. A play that she had written for Edwin Booth did not get produced. Her health was affected.

The checked revolt now began to obtain release in the impersonal disguise of indignation at man's domination of woman. She wrote in her diary, in May, 1865: "It is by a fine use of natural logic that the Quaker denomination allows women to speak under the pressure of religious conviction. 'In Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female' is a good sentence. . . . I feel that a woman's whole moral responsibility is lowered by the fact that she must never obey a transcendental command of conscience. Man can give her nothing to take the place of this. It is the divine right of the human soul." By February, 1866, she was noting: "The laws and duties of society rest upon a supposed compact, but this compact cannot deprive any set of men of rights and limit them to duties, for

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if you refuse them all rights, you deprive them even of the power to become a party to this compact which rests upon their right to do so. Our slaves had no rights. Women have few."

She was not, however, arguing for woman suffrage. "The demand for it seemed unreasonable," to her, her daughters record. "She was inclined to laugh at both the cause and its advocates." But in 1867 she got as far as joining the New England Woman's Club, and that was a radical step in conservative eyes, for what did a woman want with a club to take her away from her home? Here she compromised with herself by believing "firmly in maintaining the privacy of club life." She said, "The club is a larger home, and we wish to have the immunities and defenses of home." In 1868, she was timidly persuaded to let her name be used on a call that was issued for a public meeting on behalf of woman suffrage, but only after she had been assured that it would be "a liberal and friendly meeting without bitterness or extravagance." She did not intend to go to the meeting, but on the appointed hour she "strayed into the hall," as she says, "with no idea of taking any part in the proceedings." The result was inevitable.

Her husband, "although a believer in equal suffrage, was strongly opposed to her taking any active part" in the public campaign for suffrage, but she had found a new support against him. "One of the comforts which I found in the new association," she says, "was the relief which it afforded me from a sense of isolation and eccentricity. For years past I had felt strongly impelled to lend my voice to the convictions of my heart. I had done this in a way, from time to time, always with the feeling that my course in doing so was held to call for apology and explanation.

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. . . I now found a sphere of action in which this mode of expression no longer appeared singular or eccentric, but simple, natural, and, under the circumstances, inevitable."

It was a true jail-delivery for her, but she came out with the resentment against her jailers that is part of the prison psychology. When the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 began, she saw it only as a "mutual murder" that was wholly the work of man. "Thus men have done. Thus men will do." So the author of the "Battle Hymn" assured the women of the world in an "appeal" which she issued in September, 1870. "Arise, then, Christian women of this day!"—and make an end of war. And her diary contains paragraphs such as these: "You men by your vice and selfishness have created for women a hideous profession, whose ranks you recruit from the unprotected, the innocent, the ignorant. This is the only profession, so far as I know, that man has created for women." "Paul says, 'Ye that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak,' but now we that are weak bear the infirmities of the strong." And so forth.

That was a phase which slowly passed. She became inexhaustibly busy with public speeches on behalf of equal suffrage, with lectures, with preaching, with her campaign on behalf of international peace. She was free and she was happy. All but one of her children had married. Her husband died. Her resentment against male domination faded. "Intelligence has no sex," you find her telling a suffrage meeting. "No, gentlemen, nor folly, either." At a suffrage hearing she declared that it was "inertia which opposed suffrage, the dread of change, inherent in masses, material or moral." And during the last years of her life she had "a vision of the world regenerated



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by the combined labor and love of men and women," and in that vision she saw "men and women of every clime working like bees to unwrap the evils of society . . . the men and women standing side by side, shoulder to shoulder, a common lofty and indomitable purpose lighting every face with a glory not of this earth."

The popularity of her "Battle Hymn" had made her a national figure, and it was sung for her whenever she made a public appearance, as inevitably as a national anthem is sung for a sovereign. She had been born within three days of Queen Victoria; a certain resemblance between them was noted in their old age, and her friends in Boston called her "the Queen." She was greeted with that title at suffrage receptions, and the younger women prettily kissed her hand. She became a very distinguished public personage, and her proud daughters note that when she said good night to them of an evening, it was "always with a certain ceremony that was like the withdrawing of royalty."

Her ego was now completely maximated, as the psychologists say, but traces of the subconscious sense of inferiority still intruded. Her diary contains frequent notes of self-distrust. She was very sensitive to any appearance of a slight, and she suffered severely at the age of ninety-one because, out of "a kindly wish to spare fatigue to one so old," she was not asked to read the verses which she had brought to a Margaret Fuller centenary. She usually woke in the mornings "in deep depression," and her daughters note that, "pausing at her door to listen, one might hear a deep sigh, a plaintive ejaculation, but all this was put out of sight before she left her room." To her family, she was always "bubbling like a silver teakettle." Her humor was now playful, whimsical, and irresponsible. If anyone recalled a caustic remark of her earlier years

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of revolt, she would explain, "I was very naughty in those days." She loved to laugh. "One afternoon," writes a granddaughter, "the house was overflowing with guests, and she asked me to take my nap on her sofa, while she took hers on the bed. We both lay down in peace and tranquillity, but after a while, when she thought I was asleep, I heard her laughing until she almost wept. Presently she fell asleep, and slept her usual twenty minutes, to wake in the same gales of mirth. She laughed until the bed shook, but softly, trying to choke her laughter, lest I should wake. 'What is it about?' I asked. 'What is so wonderful and funny?' 'Oh, my dear,' she said, breaking again into laughter, 'it is nothing! It is the most ridiculous thing! I was only trying to translate "fiddle-de-dee" in Greek!' This was in her ninety-second year." A few months later she died of pneumonia.

Her life poses an interesting problem. American men and women are fairly equal at marriage, as Mrs. Howe and her husband were; but the woman is soon caught in a little depressing round of domestic duties; she feels that she is being rapidly left behind by her husband; she cannot but be aware of a continued belittlement of her personality. Is it possible for her to submerge herself in the home, lose her individual name, serve her family without repining, and be sufficiently rewarded by the success of her husband and her children to be compensated for her sacrifice of herself? Mrs. Howe could not. Can the modern American woman?

The Puritan woman and the pioneer woman did it. Much of the nation's quick material success depended upon this unpaid exploitation of woman's energy, and the American wage scale is still based on the theory that the wife works for nothing. The sick and sub-

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missive, worn-out, self-sacrificing household drudge and child-bearer was the ideal and saintly mother of the common American home; but no matter how much the men esteemed her and sought wives after her model, a constantly increasing number of daughters rebelled against imitating her. Their rebellion grew to the proportions of an organized revolt as economic changes in the nation's life compelled more and more women to make a living outside the home and gave more and more of them a taste for economic independence. The modern daughter is not raised in subservience to a stern and dominating father as the Puritan daughter used to be; and she cannot endure the sense of inferiority which overcomes her inevitably in the ordinary marriage. The right to vote will lessen but not remove that sense. How can the American civilization handle it?

Few men can afford to support a wife and pay her what she is worth as a housekeeper. The average wage-earner has all he can do to get along while his wife is working for him for nothing. If the wage scale is raised to compensate her, how will America compete with countries where wives work for nothing? What salary would repay the ordinary intelligent woman for bearing and rearing three or four children? And what personal ambition can she fulfill if she takes out of her life the years that are necessary to bring up a young family? Evidently she is already regarding children as a handicap in the competition with her husband, who remains free; and she is quickly reducing the handicap. Modern American society has been built upon her submission; her revolt is an upheaval from the foundations. While that revolt was unconscious—as it has been in the past—it caused conflict and unhappiness in the home, but it did not disturb the settled

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order of the social system. The new revolt is conscious. It has come out of the home into politics, into economics, into religion and morality. The American woman is going to have every equality that is to be had; and though nature arranges all things—and nature will arrange in its own way this revolt of the women—evidently there will be a long period of stress, of friction, and of unhappiness before it *is* arranged.



## XII. *In Anna Howard Shaw*

IF the biographers have preserved no perfect specimen of the first great type of American woman—the home-and-mother type—they have not so failed with the second, the Puritan spinster who refused to co-operate with man. She came to conspicuity, in almost bewildering profusion, during the long campaign for woman suffrage; and biography has put her on record in what the platform speakers on both sides of the argument would call “no uncertain terms.” We have chosen Anna Howard Shaw to represent her, not because Doctor Shaw was an exaggerated example of feminine revolt; she was anything but that. Nor because she stood out among her followers picturesquely in the public eye; she was too wise an executive to make herself too prominent. Nor because she was a morbid neurotic whose subconscious psychology can be easily traced; quite otherwise. She was an able, well-balanced, normal human being, as anyone can see who reads her autobiography, *The Story of a Pioneer*; and it is the possession of these qualities that makes her valuable for our purposes here. The more nearly normal the woman who revolts, the more nearly typical her impulse to revolt is likely to be.

The first few pages of Anna Shaw's story of her life are unconsciously set to a quietly consistent tune. She was born in the north of England of Scotch parents, and she rejoices, on page one, that her ancestors, the Highland Shaws, were “brave fighters” in defense

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of "what was theirs." On page two she notes humorously a case of "filial resentment" in one of the ancient Shaws who revolted against his mother's marrying a second time, picked a quarrel with his stepfather, killed him in a duel, "cut off that gentleman's head, and bore it to his mother in her bedchamber." On page three she records an injustice to her father. As the son of a gentleman who had "quite naturally and simply" dissipated his fortune and died, "leaving his wife and two sons penniless," he "turned his attention to trade, learning to stain and emboss wallpaper by hand, and developing this work until he became the recognized expert in his field. Indeed, he progressed until he himself checked his rise by inventing a machine that made his handiwork unnecessary. His employer at once claimed and utilized this invention, to which, by the laws of those days, he was entitled, and thus the cornerstone on which my father had expected to build a fortune proved the rock on which his career was wrecked." (It is perhaps fanciful to find a note of "filial resentment" against her father in the tone of some of these sentences.) On page four she admires the revolt of her maternal grandmother, who, as a Unitarian, refused to pay tithes to the Church of England, and "year after year sat pensively on her doorstep, watching articles of her furniture" being seized and sold by the tithe collectors. On page five she describes the absurd injustice of the education which her mother received in a school maintained by the Duchess of Northumberland for the children of the tenantry. They were not allowed to study geography lest it make them "discontented and inclined to wander"; nor composition, because it might "lead to the writing of love notes"; but they were taught read-

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ing and arithmetic, and especially sewing; prizes were awarded for proficiency in sewing only, and her mother took first prize. On page six there is another instance of injustice to the father. He had turned from wall-paper to the flour-and-grain business, and ten years after his marriage he "was forced into bankruptcy by the passage of the corn law." He went to work on a small salary; the mother took in sewing; and both saved every penny in a "desperate determination" to pay off their debts. On page seven it is an injustice to the mother that is noted. As a Unitarian, she was not allowed to bury "in any consecrated burial ground in her neighborhood" the body of her infant child who died during the "bleakest days" of her struggle against debt. "She had either to bury it in the Potter's Field, with criminals, suicides, and paupers," or take it by stage-coach to a Unitarian churchyard, twenty miles away. "She made her dreary journey alone, with the dear burden across her lap." And it is not so fanciful to suspect a note of "filial resentment" against the father in that word "alone."

Here, then, in the first seven pages of her story, Doctor Shaw strikes seven times the fighting note—the note either of resentment or of injustice against which resentment is implied. Out of all the incidents about her ancestors and her parents that she might have chosen to relate, she chooses these. Is the choice mere accident or is it significant of the tone of her mind? And what set her mind in that tone?

In 1846, she continues, the family went to London, but, "the big indifferent city had nothing to offer them." They moved to Newcastle-on-Tyne, and here she was born, in February, 1847. She was the sixth child of an overworked, sickly mother and a father who

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was, so far, a failure in life. A sixth child is not likely to get much affectionate attention in such a family. It is likely to be left to shift for itself in its first contacts with the realities that surround its entry upon the stage of life; and just as a delicate child will respond to neglect with fear and grow up with a subconscious sense of inferiority in such circumstances, so a sturdy child will develop independence and a fighting spirit. Anna Shaw was a sturdy child.

When she was two years old her father left the family and went to America to make a home for them. Two years later, the mother followed with "her helpless brood" in the steerage of a sailing vessel, and Anna Shaw's first conscious recollections were vague pictures of the horrors of that trip. The boat ran into a storm that lasted for days. With five hundred other immigrants, the little family were shut down under closed hatches, in the darkness of a lower deck. The waves went clear over the ship. The masts were carried away. The leaking vessel rolled and pitched helplessly and the steerage passengers went wild with fear. The mother, ill in her berth, was unable to protect her children. They were separated from her for hours at a time by "the waves of panic that sometimes approached her and sometimes receded, as they swept through the black hole in which we found ourselves when the hatches were nailed down. Our one comfort was the knowledge that our mother was not afraid. She was desperately ill, but when we were able to reach her, to cling close to her for a blessed interval, she was still the sure refuge she had always been." The vessel was towed back to Queenstown by a passing ship, and the steerage "went from their extreme of



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fear to an equal extreme of drunken celebration.” (Observe, in passing, the word “drunken.”)

The absence of the father and the helpless misery of the mother, at the mercy of these horrors, could easily become determinative influences on the mind of the child if their effect were not counteracted by subsequent events. If the mother continued to be unprotected and unhappy, thereafter, her unhappiness would be reflected as a sympathetic sorrow in the child, and it would be a sorrow that was attributable to man, in the person of the father. If the father failed to live up to the rôle of protecting hero—the part which a father plays normally in the life of such a child—man might easily appear to be a menace to the mother, not a love object, and hence a menace and not a love object to the child. And the misery of the mother’s married life would prevent the child from accepting her mother’s career as the natural goal of imitative effort. Of any of these effects, of course, the child would not be intelligently aware, but they would remain throughout her life as prevailing moods in the stratum of the mind that lies below intelligence; they would govern her conduct automatically, and they would color the tone of her intelligent thought.

It becomes sufficiently evident that subsequent events must have reinforced these early impressions, if we turn over the intervening pages of Doctor Shaw’s story of herself and look at the first paragraph of her second chapter. “Like most men,” she begins, “my dear father should never have married.” Like most men! He was not only an impractical failure, unable to protect his wife and children, but in his unfitness for marriage he was “like most men.” In other words, he was the typical man, a menace, not a proper love

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object for a woman. But he was not a dangerous menace. His inadequacy made him an object of almost contemptuous, affectionate pity to his daughter. Her unconscious attitude of mind toward him—and therefore toward man and man's government of the world—was an attitude of rather superior revolt, somewhat humorously patient on the surface, but deeply resentful and contemptuous beneath.

What were the intervening steps by which she reached this point of view about her father, about men in general, and about the "man's world" which she saw around her?

When the ship had been repaired and refitted in Queenstown, it sailed again for New York, and it had a fair-weather passage. Anna, evidently left free by the overburdened mother to follow her own devices, fraternized with the sailors, was stuffed by them with ship's sugar, and was scalded by the spilling of a pot of coffee which one of the crew dropped on her as she followed him up a companionway. The ship entered the harbor of New York under a crimson sunset that made her feel they were "entering heaven." The father was not there to receive them. He had heard that the vessel was lost with all on board, and he was in New Bedford "nursing his grief." When word of their arrival came to him, he hurried to New York; "and even now," Doctor Shaw writes, "through the mists of half a century, I can still see the expression in his wet eyes as he picked me up and tossed me into the air." It is the last time, in her story, that she describes any such expression of his.

He brought toys with him to New York, and among them "a little saw and hatchet" for her. That was an extraordinary gift for a daughter. And it was a fateful gift, as she points out; for subsequently the

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use of saw and hatchet was to be important to her. As soon as the family had settled in New Bedford, she made her first childhood friendship, "not with another child, but with my next-door neighbor, a ship-builder." He swung her up on his shoulder every morning and carried her off to his shipyard, where she played at shipbuilding with her toy tools, "at his side, all day long and day after day." She makes no comment on the state of the family affection that allowed her to be amused and taken care of, all day and every day, by a stranger. She says only: "I have always maintained that I began to earn my share of the family's living at the age of five—for, in return for the delights of my society, which seemed never to pall on him, my new friend allowed my brothers to carry home from the shipyard all the wood my mother could use." And this insistence upon her ability to earn her living—so untypical as a feminine ideal—is characteristic of her. It was probably unconsciously authorized by her father's failure to earn successfully, and by her resentment of his failure.

He allowed the family to remain in New Bedford less than a year, and then he took them to Lawrence, Massachusetts, where Anna lived until she was twelve years old. These years, from the point of view of the psychologist, were the most important of her life. She has very little to say of them. She sounds the dominant note of resentment against injustice faintly in one sentence: "At the tender age of nine or ten I became interested in the Abolition movement." And she indicates that the cellar of her father's house was a station of the "underground railway" by which escaped slaves made their way to Canada. She records at some length the manner in which she earned and spent her "first twenty-five cents." And she relates

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an incident from which we may judge of the system of Puritan morality in which her mother brought her up. Her neighbors, the Cabots, were giving a garden party and one of her sisters was helping to pick strawberries for it. This sister gave Anna two of the Cabot strawberries, because Mrs. Cabot had said she might eat "all she wanted," and she argued that if she ate two less than she wanted surely Anna might have those two. Anna ate one and took the other home as a gift to her mother. The mother was "deeply shocked" when she heard how the strawberry had been obtained. She made Anna take it back to Mrs. Cabot and confess the embezzlement. Mrs. Cabot had some sense. She kissed the little girl and returned her to her mother with a quart of berries; but, says Doctor Shaw, "for a long time afterward I could not meet Mrs. Cabot's kind eyes, for I believed that in her heart she thought me a thief." She does not remark upon the character of the mother who could receive the innocent gift of childish affection in such a spirit.

And then she describes the "second friendship" of her life—a friendship that was obviously important to her development. "A beautiful and mysterious woman" lived next door—"a vivid and romantic figure, who seemed to have no friends and of whom our elders spoke in whispers or not at all." To the child, watching from the neighboring garden, she was "a princess in a fairy tale, for she rode a white horse and wore a blue velvet riding habit with a blue velvet hat and a drooping white plume." The little girl of ten realized that "there was something unusual" about the beautiful lady's house, but she "had an idea that the prince was waiting somewhere in the far distance," and when the princess went riding, "for the time at least, she escaped the ogre in the castle



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she left behind." She adds: "I was wrong about the prince, but right about the ogre. It was only when my unhappy lady left her castle that she was free."

The ogre, of course, was man—typical man who was such a contemptible failure in marriage and who, outside of marriage, kept beautiful and unhappy princesses shut up in houses of prostitution. The children believed that the house was haunted, and Anna was afraid to reply to the princess's advances when she nodded and smiled and finally stopped to speak to her and to kiss her. Then, in a note to the parents, the princess asked that Anna be allowed to visit her. Her note ended: "She will see no one but me. No harm shall come to her. Trust me." The parents talked it over and decided to let Anna go. "Probably," says Doctor Shaw, "they felt that the slave next door was as much to be pitied as the escaped negro slaves they so often harbored in our home. I made my visit, which was the first of many, and a strange friendship began and developed between the woman of the town and the little girl she loved." The beautiful slave was an ideal playfellow, inventive in games and fairy tales, and well supplied with toys and gifts and cake and ice-cream. "She had a wonderful understanding of what a child likes. There were half a dozen women in the house with her, but I saw none of them, nor any of the men who came."

Their friendship lasted two years; it was only broken off when the Shaws left Lawrence. Of its conscious effect on Anna Shaw, she writes, "whenever, in my later work as minister, physician, and suffragist, I have been able to help women of the class to which she belonged, I have mentally offered that help for credit in the tragic ledger of her life, in which

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the clean and blotted pages were so strange a contrast." In its unconscious effect, it must have been a heavy mark against man, the sexual ogre of imprisoned princesses, the Simon Legree of enslaved women.

The incident which finally set Anna Shaw in her subconscious characteristics now followed. Her father decided to take up a tract of land in the forests of northern Michigan. "Some day, he reasoned, the place would be a fine estate, which his sons would inherit." Being without "the least practical knowledge of farming," he went to "the thick timberland instead of going to the rich and waiting prairies." He and his eldest son made a clearing in the woods and built the shell of a log cabin. He left his son, twenty years old, to hold down his claim, returned to Lawrence to work with his two younger sons, and sent his wife, her three daughters, and a son of eight, to live on "the farm." They got as far as Grand Rapids by railroad. The remainder of the trip—a hundred miles of it—had to be made in a wagon, "filled with bedding and provisions," through a dense forest where there was no road, across streams that had no bridges. "We had an idea that we were going to a farm," Doctor Shaw writes, "and we expected some resemblance at least to the prosperous farms we had seen in New England. My mother's mental picture was naturally of an English farm of red barns and deep meadows, sunny skies and daisies." After a ride that was a tedious and dangerous and exhausting adventure, they found, in a patch of cleared land in the forest, the four walls and roof of a log cabin, without a floor, without furniture, "its doors and windows represented by square holes." The shock was too much for the mother. She entered and looked slowly around her.

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"Then something within her seemed to give way and she sank upon the ground," covered her face with her hands, and remained motionless in a sort of trance that continued for hours. The children stood around her "in a frightened group, talking to one another in whispers." Night fell. The owls began to hoot, the wild cats to screech, the wolves to howl. The mother did not move until the eldest son lit bonfires around the cabin to keep off the wild animals, and then she looked up at the light. "Her face when she raised it was worse than her silence had been. She seemed to have died and returned to us from the grave." They put her to bed "on boughs spread on the earth inside the cabin walls," and they covered the gaping holes of doors and windows with blankets. The night was horrible with the menace of the animals outside; but "that which I most feared was within, not outside, the cabin," says Doctor Shaw. "In some way which I did not understand, the one sure refuge in our new world had been taken from us. I hardly knew the silent woman who lay near me, tossing from side to side and staring into the darkness; I felt that we had lost our mother." She was an invalid thereafter. "She had a nervous affection which made it impossible for her to stand without the support of a chair"; she moved about the house by pushing herself around on a stool which her son made for her.

This was the father's ultimate failure as far as his daughter was concerned. It had no weight in his mind, she says, that his wife and daughters were "one hundred miles from a railroad, forty miles from the nearest post office, and half a dozen miles from any neighbors save Indians, wolves, and wildcats," that they were there without "even the bare necessities of life," and that they were entirely ignorant of both

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woodcraft and farming. "Though his nature was one of the sweetest I have ever known, and though he would at any call give his time to or risk his life for others, in practical matters he remained to the end of his days as irresponsible as a child." He wrote to them "regularly" and sent "occasional remittances, as well as a generous supply of improving literature for our minds. It remained for us to strengthen our bodies, to meet the conditions in which he had placed us, and to survive if we could."

The year that followed made Anna Shaw what she remained to the day of her death. She began to work with her elder brother to render their house habitable; they obtained lumber from a mill nine miles away, laid a floor, built doors and windows, put up partitions, cut off an attic, made rough furniture. It was now that she used her saw and hatchet to good purpose. After a few months the brother took ill and left them. Anna, twelve years old, and another brother of eight, undertook to do all the outside work; her mother and sisters kept to indoor tasks. They had no horses to plow with, and their ground was full of tree stumps in any case. They planted corn and potatoes by chopping the sod with an axe and putting the seed in the cut. They gathered berries and caught fish. During their first winter they lived on cornmeal, "making a little journey of twenty miles to the nearest mill to buy it." Doing the work of a man, with a masculine independence, unprotected by the irresponsible father, and herself protecting the invalid mother with whom she sympathized against the father's irresponsibility, she developed a bitter sort of self-reliance that was colored with a natural resentment.

During the long winter evenings she read and studied



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diligently in the family books, a box of which had been brought from Lawrence. There was an "inevitable copy of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, whose pages I freely moistened with my tears." Resentful ambition took a curious form in her. "For some reason I wanted to preach—to talk to people, to tell them things. Just why, just what, I did not yet know." It was evidently not preaching in the evangelical sense. "I had begun to preach in the silent woods, to stand up on stumps and address the unresponsive trees, to feel the stir of aspiration in me." She may have begun it out of mere loneliness, and the fancied resemblance of the trees to a standing audience, and the need to have at least imaginary listeners for some form of self-expression. And it may be that she spoke for sympathy against some household injustice after her father rejoined the family; for she refers to this make-believe oratory in connection with an unfair criticism that her father made of her when she had been in the woods "all day buried in my books," and he reproached her "as an idler who wasted time while mother labored," and predicted "gloomily that with such tendencies I would make nothing of my life." She replied to him: "Father, some day I am going to college. And before I die I shall be worth ten thousand dollars."

She had never heard of a woman going to college, and ten thousand dollars was so large a sum that "the amount staggered me even as it dropped from my lips." She had spoken "recklessly," but, she says, "now that I had put my secret hopes into words, I was desperately determined to make those hopes come true." Her father smiled "his slight, ironical smile." She was to see a similar smile on the lips of many men later, but it was not often to be so slight or so politely ironical. It always had, however, the same effect of making her

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more "desperately determined"; and her autobiography is rich with anecdotes of how she made men smile on the other side of the face, ruefully, as she triumphed over them.

She had now three heavy counts against man—his injustice, typified by her father's treatment of her mother and herself; man's lust, typified by his ogreish enslavement of the beautiful princess; and his drunkenness, typified by what she had seen in the horrible steerage celebration and saw again in an incident of greater horror when drunken Indians came upon the unprotected mother and her children in their cabin and gave them a night of appalling fear. These three counts made the enduringly determinative impulses of her life; for, though at first she drifted into preaching and became a minister, and studied medicine to help her in her missionary work for the poor, she finally resigned from the ministry to join the women who were fighting "for suffrage, for temperance, for social purity"—against her three girlhood enemies, man's injustice, drunkenness, and lust—and she remained happy in that fight to the end of her life.

She was not, like Julia Ward Howe, in revolt against man's domination because of a too strict and repressive father; it was out of sympathy with the unhappy mother, primarily, that she rose against man's injustice. And her father being inefficient and irresponsible, she developed an ideal of practical working and saving that was more masculine than his. She wore her hair short, like a man's, until in her later years she found it wise to look less like the suffragette of the cartoonists. She was subconsciously impelled to make her way into the two professions—medicine and the ministry—which were then the particular preserves of man. With the physical endurance of a pioneer trained in

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the hardest kind of farm labor, she had unfailing courage, unfaltering independence, "desperate determination," an abler mind than any of the men she competed against, and a practical wisdom and finesse that easily outwitted them. She was typical of the "mannish woman" in the American feminine revolt who seemed to imitate man while she despised him.

Starting out in life in a mood of contemptuous resentment of injustice, she found plenty of injustice to resent. None of it was imaginary, but her autobiography contains very little else. She quarreled with the teacher of a new school that was opened near her home in the wilderness—a spinster forty-four years old and "the only genuine 'old maid' I ever met who was not a married woman or a man." She left school at the teacher's "fervid request" and continued her studies at home. At fifteen she was offered a position as school-teacher herself, and passed her examination "before a school board of three nervous and self-conscious men." When men were not unjust, they were ridiculous. An awkward beau came to court her. He wore a pair of trousers made of flour bags, with the name of the miller printed on the legs and "96 pounds" printed across the seat. Her sisters had guests that evening, and they listened through the partition while her suitor told her that "his 'dad' had just given him a cabin, a yoke of steers, a cow, and some hens. . . . He asked, solemnly, 'Will ye have me?'" She refused him to an accompaniment of giggles from the next room. When he had gone, the others laughed till they cried. "For some time after that incident," she says, "I felt a strong distaste for sentiment." It is the only sentimental incident in her story.

When men were not unjust, they were ridiculous, but they were almost invariably unjust. A man with whom

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she had gone to board, near her school, persuaded her to pay for the season's board in advance, and then nailed up his cabin door and departed with her money. Her married sister, Eleanor, died in childbirth while her husband was serving with the Union forces during the Civil War, and left her baby boy to Anna; she had no sooner grown attached to the child than the husband married again and took the boy away from her. She gave up teaching, decided to learn a trade, and went to live with a married sister in Big Rapids while she was deciding what to do. There she heard a woman minister preach, and all her early aspirations to become a preacher returned to her. The woman minister encouraged her in the ambition, but her brother-in-law was strongly opposed to it, and in the end her sister and her whole family agreed with him. She went ahead, nevertheless. She studied at the high school, cheered on by the preceptress of the school, who put her forward in the speaking and debating classes. She was to recite a poem on "public exhibition night"; at her first attempt, she fainted from stage fright, but as soon as she had been revived she struggled back to the platform and finished amid applause. Through a friendly man minister she got an opportunity to preach a sermon. She preached it, though her sister wept and her brother-in-law instigated a note in the local newspaper to say that "her real friends deprecate the course she is pursuing." Then her whole family summoned her to a council, offered to pay for a college course for her at Ann Arbor if she would give up preaching, and threatened her with ostracism from the family circle if she refused. They gave her twenty-four hours to decide. "It did not require twenty-four hours of reflection," she says, "to convince me that I must go my solitary way."



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She delivered thirty-six sermons that year, and at the annual Methodist conference she was given a license to preach. It is interesting to note that she had felt no religious "call" to the pulpit. Before giving her first sermon, she realized with alarm that she had never been "converted"; so she and her friend, the preceptress of the high school, set to work to pray together for an accession of grace. They kept at it "for hours at a time." Finally they spent a whole night in prayer, and "toward morning," says Doctor Shaw, "either from exhaustion of body or exaltation of soul, I seemed to see the light, and it made me very happy. With all my heart, I wanted to preach, and I believed that now, at last, I had my call." As a matter of fact, she was never of a religious temperament. It was an irresistible ego impulse that put her in the pulpit, as it drove Julia Ward Howe to read essays on ethics in public. She came to regard God as a special providence who had, as she says, "my small personal affairs very much on His mind," and she looked on a turn of luck as "a sign of His approval." But, in time, this reliance upon God became, after the true Puritan manner, a self-reliance, as she prospered; and in her later years she "called upon the Lord less often and less imperatively than I did before the stern years taught me my unimportance in the great scheme of things."

With eighteen dollars in her purse, earned by preaching, she went to Albion College, Michigan. On the morning after her arrival she found on the campus a penny that had been minted on the year of her birth. "A good omen, and it was emphatically underlined by the finding of two exactly similar pennies within the week." She kept them to the end of her life—religiously. Her first public speech at college was a defense of Xantippe. "I have always felt," she says,

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“that the poor lady was greatly abused, and that Socrates deserved all he received from her, and more.” (Socrates probably reminded her of her impractical father.) Albion was a coeducational institution. She led the members of the women’s debating society in a revolt against the men’s. She “discovered that when there was an advantage of any kind to be secured the men invariably got it”—and by “high-handed methods.” One of these advantages was the position of orator at a reunion of the societies; the orator was invariably a man. She got the girls to nominate a girl candidate; the election was deadlocked, and the boys retaliated on the author of the difficulty by nominating Miss Shaw and getting her elected. The president of the college forced her to accept. Supported by a “white alpaca creation trimmed with satin”—a gift of forgiveness from her family—and by “the consciousness that it was extremely becoming,” she delivered the oration successfully.

She earned her college expenses by giving temperance lectures in neighboring country towns, and by preaching. One night, on a drive through the Northern woods—having heard “appalling tales of the stockades in this region and of the women who were kept prisoners there”—her worst fears were justified when the driver on the seat in front of her began “deliberately affronting” her ears with stories of these stockades and with oaths and “shocking vulgarities.” When she remonstrated with him, he replied that he knew what kind of a woman would be driving alone with him through those woods at night. “I’ve got you here,” he said, “and I’m going to keep you here.” She drew a revolver from her handbag, cocked it, and stuck it in his back. “Now,” she ordered, “drive on. If you stop again, or speak, I’ll shoot you.” He drove the rest of

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the way in silence, though he used his whip "savagely on the backs of his horses." It was a horrible ride, "worse than any nightmare a woman could imagine," but it had a prosperous issue. The ogreish villain boasted of the woman preacher's courage to his friends, the lumber men of the camp, and they came to her sermon in a body and contributed to her collection "with much liberality and with cheerful shouts of: 'Put in fifty cents. Give her a dollar!'" She took "the largest collection in the history of the settlement." A typical member of her congregation could not tell what she had preached about, but he was sure that "the little preacher has sure got grit." In relating the incident Doctor Shaw accepts the compliment to herself, but with no smiling bow to this engaging aspect of the sexual ogre who presented the bouquet.

She left Albion College without completing her course, because she wished to go to Boston University, study theology, and "be about my Father's business." Here she realized that "women theologians paid heavily for the privilege of being women." The young men were assisted and provided for. She was the only woman in her class, and no "kindly provision" was made for her. She lived alone in an unheated Boston attic, with a skylight, but no window, and she starved on a diet of milk and crackers. She found few opportunities to preach; there were too many preachers in New England without her; and the few opportunities were ill paid. Remembering the beautiful princess of Lawrence, she "set earnestly about the effort to help unfortunates of her class," but, she says, "I soon learned that the effective work in that field is the work which is done for women before, not after, they have fallen." And this discouragement must have made another large debit in her long account against man.

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Her friendships, from this time on, were all with women. Her instinct of affection was undoubtedly "conditioned," as the psychologists say, to respond now to women and not to men. It was a perfectly healthy conditioning. There was nothing morbid about it. A wealthy widow, a Mrs. Addy, took her into her home, and "for the first time," she writes, "I had some one to confide in, some one to talk to and love." She was appointed temporary pastor of the Methodist church of Hingham, and there Mrs. Addy took ill and died, leaving her fifteen hundred dollars. She quadrupled the membership of her church in Hingham, paid off the church debt, and had the building repaired. "Now that it was out of its difficulties, it offered some advantages to the occupant of its pulpit, and of these my successor, a man, received the benefit." She moved to a difficult parish in East Dennis, Cape Cod, and after a long struggle she triumphed over all kinds of difficulty and dissension there. She left the Methodist Episcopal Church because, as a woman, she was refused ordination in it. She was ordained in the Methodist Protestant Church, after a bitter struggle against the sex antagonism of the members of the Conference of 1880, and she settled down in peace in her Cape Cod ministry, shepherding two parishes, studying medicine in the Boston Medical School, and doing missionary work among the women of the streets.

But peace was not what she wanted. She felt that she was "getting into a rut," "taking life too easily." "My soul," she says, "sent forth a sudden call to arms." Her work among the prostitutes had convinced her that any effort to help them "must begin at the very bottom of the social structure." Everywhere around her she saw "women, overworked and underpaid, doing men's work at half men's wages, not because their work was



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inferior, but because they were women . . . and, looking at the whole social situation from every angle, I could find but one solution for women—the removal of the stigma of disfranchisement. As man's equal before the law, woman could demand her rights, asking favors from no one. With all my heart I joined in the crusade of the men and women who were fighting for her.”

She resigned from her Cape Cod pulpits in 1885, and went to work as a lecturer for the Massachusetts Woman Suffrage Association at a salary of fifty dollars a month, and she supplemented the salary with Chautauqua lectures on temperance. In 1888 Susan B. Anthony persuaded her to drop her temperance work and devote all her energies to suffrage alone. “Win suffrage for women,” Miss Anthony argued, “and the rest will follow.” They campaigned together for years, under the most heart-breaking conditions, against every sort of discouragement, amid insult, ridicule, and injustice. One of Doctor Shaw's little nieces said to her small sister: “Aren't you ashamed to stop just because you have been laughed at? Look at Aunt Anna! She has been laughed at for hundreds of years!” And her story of those years is no laughing matter.

It is a resentful story, but it could not help but be so. It is full of Miss Shaw's personal triumphs; it does not record the final triumph of the Cause, but she lived to see the triumph of the Cause assured, and in her last years she was a mellowly happy woman, much honored and much loved. “Nothing bigger can come to a human being,” she wrote, “than to love a great Cause more than life itself, and to have the privilege throughout life of working for that Cause.” She was at the head of the organized women's war work in

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Washington; she found it difficult to make women pull together; and she confessed to her friends some discouraged disappointment with the sex. She did not live to see the millennium arrive with their enfranchisement. If she had lived, she would probably have found mere enfranchisement inadequate. It is likely that the subconscious mood of resentment would have persisted in her as it has persisted in so many of her coadjutors. And if her vitality had permitted, she would naturally have led in the present campaign for the complete equality of men and women before the law, and after that for economic equality, the abolition of the "double standard" of morality and the removal of whatever else there is to be resented in the attitude of the world toward women.

The truth seems to be that the Puritan American woman, when she successfully represses her sex instinct to the point of anæsthesia, produces in her subconsciousness an unrelieved tension that is felt as an urge to revolt. If she can identify her subconscious resentment against her own repression as sympathy with the injustices done to her sex, she makes a powerful advocate of reform. If she does not make this identification, the tension may appear as an extraordinarily exalted form of egotistic ambition. The circumstances of Doctor Shaw's life made the identification complete, and she functioned admirably as a woman's champion. The egotism of her youth, before she made the identification, drove her on her "solitary way," ostracized by her family. In the pulpit, even though she felt that she was about her Father's business and under God's especial care, she got an insufficient relief for her psychic tension; and when this unrelief came into her conscious mind she felt it as her soul's "call to arms." But when

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she merged her revolt with the revolt of her sex, she made a religion of women's Cause, and found greater relief and happiness on the platform of her new faith than in the pulpit of her old one.

### XIII. *In Margaret Fuller*

MARGARET FULLER was a conspicuous specimen of the American intellectual of the "blue-stocking" variety—referred to in a previous chapter as appearing in New England during the years before the Civil War—but she was also a great deal more than that. She wrote of herself, privately, in her thirties: "There are, in every age, a few in whose lot the meaning of that age is concentrated. I feel that I am one of those persons in my age and sex. I feel chosen among women." And she had every justification to give herself for the feeling. She had been the close friend of Emerson and she had not found herself inferior to him in intellect. Accepted as a sort of Puritan Aspasia to the Transcendentalists, she had become "the most distinguished woman of her day in Boston," as Henry James described her. She was famous for the brilliancy of her conversation; Emerson pronounced it "the most interesting conversation in America." She succeeded as a writer and a lecturer in competition with the best of that "Augustan age" of American letters. Horace Greeley declared her "the most remarkable, and in some respects the greatest, woman whom America has yet known." He considered her, also, "the best instructed woman in America"; and the literary criticisms that she wrote for him still stand as the work of "one of the best-equipped, most sympathetic, and genuinely philosophical critics produced in



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America prior to 1850." It was not an absurd egotism that made her confess to herself, at the height of her career: "I now know all the people worth knowing in America, and I find no intellect comparable to my own."

To the women of her period she was, as Julia Ward Howe says, "the inspired Pythoness" of an "enlarged domain of womanhood," and she helped to enlarge the domain. She wrote a feminist book, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, in which she expressed broader views on matters of sex than the Puritans of the 'forties could forgive. The book hurt her in the eyes of the conventional, but it also inspired many of the women who read it to join in the insurgency of the first woman's rights convention of the early 'fifties. She became suspected of the mild liberalism in morals and politics that was the "Bolshevism" of the moment; and she justified the suspicion, at last, to her friends and her enemies, by entering into some sort of "irregular union," at the age of forty, with a young Italian of twenty-two, the Marquis Ossoli, by whom she had a child. Returning to America from her participation in the Italian revolution of 1849, she was shipwrecked off New York Harbor and drowned with her husband and her baby; and by that tragic "curtain" her life and figure were made startlingly dramatic to the contemporary eye and the public interest. If her fame has shrunk since, it is because she made less a record than an impression while she lived. She was an unusual and distinguished character. Her type is not so uncommon among European women, for she is of the same pattern as George Eliot and even George Sand; but she differs from them in ways that are characteristically American; and in her resemblance to them and her difference from them she is an interesting specimen

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for psychological study—a specimen of the artistic temperament trying to express itself rebelliously in the life and environment of an American woman.

In many contemporary accounts of her she is the stereotyped blue-stockings—plain-looking; inclined to be pedantic; frequently repellent to her intellectual inferiors, to whom she seemed satirical; awkwardly intense in her manner, and disfigured in that intensity by a nervous blinking of the eyes. The alluring qualities of her conversation were attributed at best to a merely intellectual curiosity in persons and events. She had many friends, but apparently no serious love affairs. Her final adventure with Ossoli was hushed up by her New England circle and reported to the public as a conventional marriage; and it seems to have been accepted by her intimates as one of those temporary insanities of sentiment for which there is no accounting. All the early memoirs of her are concerned only with the psychology of her conscious intelligence, and they suppress, as rather morbid, incidents in her girlhood that were hysteric. Katherine Anthony, in a recent biography, goes to a Freudian extreme and finds her consistently thwarted in her life by a passionate fixation of affection on her father. The truth about her seems not to be so simple as either the contemporary picture or the Freudian theory of her.

She was obviously alien to the New-Englanders around her, both in mind and in conduct. Why? What made her so? She was the daughter of an old New England family, born and educated in Cambridge, raised in Puritanism, and always subject to the influence of its social ideals. How did she escape being molded by it to the conventional type of her time? And why, for all her difference, did she still remain so

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faithfully a daughter of Puritanism in comparison with women of her sort abroad?

Katherine Anthony finds the answer to most of these questions in the relations between Margaret and her father. He was a Timothy Fuller, of a family that was noted for qualities of self-assertion that were "disagreeable." His father, a New England minister, quarreled with his congregation and lost his pulpit in Revolutionary days; and Timothy and his four brothers, "with one accord, forsook the ministry and took to the law." They worked their way through Harvard, where Timothy "began his career of nonconformity" by taking part in a students' rebellion, becoming a Unitarian, and espousing the democratic doctrines of Jefferson. He was graduated from Harvard in 1801, began the practice of law, and went into politics. At the age of thirty-one he fell in love "at first sight with a handsome girl who was worse than penniless, for she was well endowed with poor relations." Margaret, his eldest child, was born less than a year later, in May, 1810. He was elected to the Massachusetts Senate in 1813, to the United States Congress in 1817, to the Speakership of the Massachusetts House of Representatives in 1825, and to a seat in the Executive Council in 1828. But his law practice did not thrive. As a Jacobin in politics, all the powers of wealth and business in Boston were opposed to him. At the age of fifty-five, on the verge of bankruptcy, with a large family to support, he gave up both law and politics and retired to a farm, where he died, two years later, of Asiatic cholera. Margaret Fuller was then twenty-five years old.

He had taken almost complete possession of her from her infancy. "From the time she could speak and go alone," she wrote of herself, "he addressed her not as a

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plaything, but as a living mind." He had her studying Latin at six years of age, reading Ovid and Horace at eight, and Molière in French in her 'teens. "In so far as he possessed the keys to the wonders of the universe," she says, "he allowed free use of them to her, and by the incentive of a high expectation he forbade . . . that she should let the privilege lie idle." At thirteen, James Freeman Clarke says of her, she was "so precocious in her mental and physical development that she passed for eighteen or twenty." William H. Channing recalled her as a nearsighted girl with "awkward manners, extravagant tendencies of thought, and a pedantic style of talk which made her a butt for the ridicule of frivolous companions." Even as a nursery child, she had to sit up at night until her father had heard her repeat her lessons, no matter how late he might be; and he was such an exacting taskmaster that she usually went to bed with "nerves unnaturally stimulated," as she says, "the victim of spectral illusions, nightmare, and somnambulism."

"He not only instructed her in the classics," says Katherine Anthony, "but he guided her training in the domestic arts as well. Her dress, her correspondence, her parties all fell under the paternal supervision. . . . When the Fullers had guests, Mr. Fuller and his daughter entertained them, while Mrs. Fuller merely appeared as a shy and awkward figure in the background. In brief, Margaret had crowded her mother out of her rightful position in the family with the most complete success. It was no wonder that she grew up so bold and, as she herself said, 'at nineteen the most intolerable girl that ever took seat in a drawing-room.' . . . The middle-aged Puritan father, who wished to renew his youth by spiritual loot from the next generation, was himself to blame for much of her suffering."



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But Katherine Anthony, engaged in proving that Margaret had a "father complex," rather overlooks evidence that does not fit her theory. As a matter of fact, the mother had, in a peculiar way, an overwhelming influence on the daughter. It is recorded of Mrs. Fuller: "In youth she was possessed of great personal beauty and was much admired in Washington circles when her husband was in Congress. She had a rare conversational gift, aided by a lively fancy and a well-stored mind, which made her society valued by the educated and gifted." These are qualities which her daughter imitated, and they are not the qualities of a shy and awkward figure in a background. Moreover, she had another quality which affected her daughter in a very odd and subtle way. Mrs. Fuller was passionately fond of flowers. Whenever the family moved, "she transplanted her garden like her nursery," as Thomas Wentworth Higginson says in his life of Margaret Fuller; and he remarks that the mother "seems to have naturally suggested to the daughter some flowerlike symbol." Margaret, indeed, wrote of her mother that she "was one of those fair and flowerlike natures which sometimes spring up beside the most dusty highways of life—a creature not to be shaped into a merely useful instrument, but bound by one law with the blue sky, the dew, and the frolic birds." In her mother's garden, she says, "the best hours of my lonely childhood were spent. I loved to gaze on the roses, the violets, the lilies, the pinks; my mother's hands had planted them and they bloomed for me. . . . I kissed them, I pressed them to my bosom with passionate emotions, such as I have never dared express to any human being."

Why did she not dare to express those passionate emotions to the mother herself? "My mother," she

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says, "was in delicate health and much absorbed in the care of her younger children." She had nine children in sixteen years. She left her eldest daughter to a "lonely childhood" either because she was absorbed in the younger children or because she turned from the father's favorite to the children whom he had not taken from her; and Margaret, in her loneliness, transferred to her mother's flowers her instinctive love for her mother. It was an unconscious transference, of course, but it appears to have laid down an "action pattern" that affected her whole life, because it made her unrequited instinct of affection show as a hungry love of beauty and it put a sort of suppressed yearning of passion into her æsthetic sense.

"Our house," she wrote, "though comfortable, was very ugly and in a neighborhood which I detested. I liked nothing about us except the tall, graceful elms before the house and the dear little garden behind." The two elms were her father's; he had planted them on the day of her birth. The garden was her mother's. "A gate opened thence"—out of the garden—"into the fields, a wooden gate, embowered in clematis creeper. . . . How I loved the silvery wreaths of my protecting vine. . . . It stands in nature to my mind as the emblem of domestic love." Her father was undemonstrative, "a Roman senator" to her childish eyes. Her mother was withdrawn, inaccessible—as beautiful and indifferent as "the blue sky, the dew, and the frolic birds," or the unresponsive flowers in her garden. Like many children who suffer for want of parental affection, Margaret began to feel that she was "a changeling" in an "adopted home." Her craving for love, masked as a craving for beauty, began to create poetic and beautiful phantasies for her. "Ovid gave me not Rome, nor himself, but a view into the enchanted gar-

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dens of Greek mythology." Unconsciously, she identified those gardens with her mother's. She loved, she says, "to creep from amid the Roman pikes"—her studies and her father's books—"to lie beneath this great vine," at the gate of her mother's garden, "and see the smiling shapes go by, woven from the finest fibers of all the elements . . . these gods and nymphs born of the sunbeam, the wave, the shadows on the hill."

That is the strain in Margaret Fuller which Katharine Anthony overlooks. And Margaret Fuller's contemporaries overlooked it. Deceived by the awkward manner and the pedantic talk, they described her as if she were all critical intelligence and highbrow. Only Channing perceived that she was really "a poet, a true worshiper of Apollo." And he saw why she was a poet. "The very glow of her poetic enthusiasm," he says, "was but an outflush of trustful affection; the very restlessness of her intellect was the confession that her heart had found no home." And her longing love of beauty—beginning as a yearning love for her beautiful mother, the inaccessible goddess of the beautiful garden—continued to make New England life and the New England youths unromantic and unappealing to her, and to prepare her for the inevitable outcome of her meeting with the handsome Italian boy, in the Rome of her dreams, thirty years later.

Without her almost passionate æsthetic sense, she might have been as typically Puritan as the women around her. And if her æsthetic longing had been allowed a free expression, she might have become a true poet and imaginative artist, a George Eliot or a George Sand. She was largely balked of that expression by the education that her father gave her. Whatever his revolt in the dogma of religion and the theory

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of politics, he remained a faithful son of the Puritan fathers in his culture. Accepting a rational religion in place of an emotional faith, and relying on the development of intellect as the road even to salvation, the Puritans produced a higher education that began as a training in logical disputation for the defense of dogma, and Harvard set up the grindstones for sharpening intellect to precision in this form of thought. Precision and finality were achieved at the expense of feeling and imagination, which were discouraged as the enemies of precision. Logical thinking produced keen reasoning in religion, in law, and in business; art, which is the reflection of feeling in imaginative thought, was blighted.

"My father," Margaret Fuller wrote, "was taught as a boy to think only of preparing himself for Harvard University, and when there of preparing himself for the profession of law. As a lawyer, again, the ends constantly presented were to work for distinction in the community and for the means of supporting a family. To be an honored citizen and to have a home on earth were made the great aims of existence." That is typically Yankee and Puritan. "He hoped to make me the heir to all he knew. . . . He thought to gain time by bringing forward the intellect as early as possible. Thus I had tasks given me, as many and various as the hours would allow, and on subjects beyond my age. . . . He demanded accuracy and clearness in everything; you must not speak unless you can make your meaning perfectly intelligible to the person addressed; must not express a thought unless you can give a reason for it, if required; must not make a statement unless you are sure of all particulars—such were his rules. . . . Trained to great dexterity in artificial methods, accurate, ready, with entire command of his



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resources, he had no belief in minds that listen, wait, and receive."

Such a training might not have been a bad one to give a boy. It would have made him an able lawyer, certainly. But it had obvious disadvantages for a girl. In those days, even more than to-day, her happiness and success in life depended on her winning social approval, family affection, and some man's love. Margaret Fuller's father unconsciously taught her that the way to win approval was by intellectuality, that affection was the reward of book learning. The results were unfortunate. They made her a famous blue-stocking, but they wrecked her happiness.

The first effect of his methods was to produce in the child an almost destructive subconscious anxiety. Set at tasks far beyond her years, she struggled with them till late at night to please him, and the struggle continued in her anxious dreams. Her instinctive need of affection showed in her sleep walking, which was, as in Mark Twain, an unconscious attempt to escape from nightmares and take refuge with the parent. When her father found her walking in her sleep, moaning, and he waked her, and she told him what she had dreamed, he ordered her to "leave off thinking of such nonsense or she would be crazy." Such a warning would hardly lessen her anxiety, and the clearness with which she recalled her earliest nightmares, years later, shows how they impressed her. Among them there was a morbid fear-of-death dream. The death of a younger sister had been her first conscious recollection. She remembered "particularly our nursery maid, her face streaming with tears. That strange sight of tears made an indelible impression. . . . I realize how little I was of stature, in that I looked up to this weeping face; and it has often seemed since that, full grown for this life of

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this earth, I have looked up just so, at time of threatening, of doubt and distress." One of her nightmares pictured "colossal faces," with "eyes dilating" and features "swelling loathsomely." It is quite probable that these subconscious fears produced the "tic" which disfigured her through life, a rapid blinking of the eyes as if winking to keep back tears. In a child's mind, the parent is God; the great sin is disobedience; the parent's disapproval is the wrath of Heaven; and, in Margaret Fuller's early dreams, fear of the father's disapproval, fear of sin, and fear of death must have been all confused together. In her later years, looking up at the Father's face above her, "in times of threatening, of doubt and distress," she was probably repeating the early subconscious attitude of her Puritan childhood, blinking fearfully.

Katherine Anthony finds in all these dreams the usual Freudian symbols of a precocious sexuality. It is certain that Freud was wrong in believing that dream symbols have a universal significance and that they do not vary with the individual mind. And, in Margaret Fuller's recorded dreams, the chief emotion is the anxiety of disapproval—whether a Puritan disapproval of sex be involved or not—the anxiety of disapproval and the despair of lonely affection.

In her eighth year her æsthetic phantasies received a powerful reinforcement. She found Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet." She found it on a Sunday, and she was not allowed to read such books on the Sabbath. She read it, nevertheless. She had been reading it absorbedly for some minutes before her father noticed what she had. "That won't do," he said. "That's no book for Sunday." He made her put it back on its shelf. She sat for a time thinking of what she had read, and then mechanically she took down the volume

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again and continued reading it. When he asked her what she was reading, she replied, still mechanically, "Shakespeare." He took the book from her and sent her to bed as a punishment. When he came to scold her for her disobedience, "shown in a way, as he considered, so insolent," she was impenitent. "I listened," she confesses, "but I could not feel interested in what he said. I thought only of the scene placed by the poet before my eye, where the free flow of life, sudden and graceful dialogue, and forms, whether grotesque or fair seen in the broad luster of his imagination, gave just what I wanted and brought home the life I seemed born to live. . . . Here was a counterpoise to my Romans, still more forcible than my little garden."

She returned to Shakespeare at every free moment. Her studies and her daily life seemed less real than her imaginings. "My own world sank deep within, away from the surface of my life. . . . My true life was only the dearer that it was secluded and veiled over by a thick curtain of available intellect and that coarse but wearable stuff, woven by the ages, Common Sense." Not until her young Italian Romeo arrived when she was forty did this inner life come clearly through the curtain and astonish her friends by showing in her conduct. Yet it had affected her conduct from childhood, and an understanding of it is the key to an understanding of her true character.

She says of herself, at thirteen: "I saw no persons who took my fancy, and real life offered no attractions. . . . At church, I used to look around with a feeling of coldness and disdain. . . . The puny child sought everywhere for the Roman or Shakespearian figures, and she was met by the shrewd, honest eye, the homely decency, or the smartness of a New England village on Sunday." A family in a neighboring pew were her

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especial aversion. The five daughters all had an "old, fairy, knowing look"; they were "hard, dry, dwarfed strangers to the All-fair"; they were "working-day residents of this beautiful planet." While she was regarding them with dislike, one Sunday, her eyes were arrested "by a face most fair," the face of a stranger, an English lady; and she fell in love with this beauty at sight. She proved to be "elegant and captivating"; she painted in oils and played the harp. They became friends. "Like a guardian spirit she led me through the fields and groves, and every tree, every bird greeted me, and said what I felt: 'She is the first angel of my life.'" She had particularly a graceful carriage; "the gentle swaying motion she made, all through life has gladdened memory"; and Margaret seems to have made an unconscious imitation of that carriage so successfully that it became one of her most notable physical charms. J. F. Clarke wrote of her: "She escaped the reproach of positive plainness most of all by the very peculiar and graceful carriage of her head and neck which all who knew her well remember as the most characteristic trait in her personal appearance." And Channing, remarking on the "singular pliancy of the vertebræ and muscles of her neck," adds that "in moments of tenderness or pensive feeling, its curves were swanlike in grace."

All her repressed affections flowed out to the Englishwoman as a new mother image. "It was my first real interest in my kind," she says, "and it engrossed me wholly. I had seen her—I should see her—and my mind lay steeped in visions that flowed from this source." When the visitor departed, Margaret was overwhelmed. "Those who are really children could not know such love or feel such sorrow. . . . I fell into a profound depression. I knew not how to exert



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myself, but lay bound hand and foot. Melancholy enfolded me." She became ill. Her father, apparently realizing the morbidness of her state of mind, decided that she needed the companionship of girls of her own age and sent her to a boarding school in Groton, Massachusetts. And now the practical absurdities of his scheme of education began to show themselves.

She was clumsy, pedantic, egotistical, craving affection, but unaware of any way to win it except by a display of superior intellectuality, eccentric and repellent. "I had no success in associating with my playmates. My book life and lonely habits had given a cold aloofness to my whole expression, and veiled my manner with hauteur which turned all hearts away." She began to suffer with the headaches which persecuted her all her life—the headaches of despair. Then an opportunity to appear in the school theatricals came to her. She was a natural mimic. "Had she condescended to appear before the footlights," Horace Greeley later said of her, "she would soon have been recognized as the first actress of the nineteenth century." She was given the principal parts to play, and she triumphed in them. After the plays were finished, she continued to use theatrical rouge in the class room, in some sort of pathetic attempt to make herself beautiful. Her schoolmates retorted with a practical joke; "she came down to dinner to find all the girls deeply rouged with round, staring spots on their cheeks." She pretended not to notice, though even the servants giggled. She became, for the moment, "the Roman matron who said of her death wound, 'It isn't painful.'" She had never "suspected," she says, "that a popular favorite might not be loved." To her craving for affection, as well as to her inordinate egotism, the ridicule was deadly. She ate her dinner without flinch-

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ing, went to her room, locked her door, and fell on the floor in convulsions.

The school girls realized that the joke had been too brutal and they tried to make amends with friendliness when Margaret returned to the class rooms. She seemed saddened and subdued, though she was inwardly raging with "the sense of burning resentment at universal perfidy." She planned an elaborate revenge. As they accepted her into their friendships she began secretly to set girl against girl by means of little lying intrigues. At the end of four months she was summoned before the principal and eight of the girls charged her with "calumny and falsehood." She was standing by a fireplace. Suddenly she threw herself down on the hearth, struck her head against the irons, and lay unconscious.

Her remorse was as violent as her action. "Sin-de-filed," she thought, "I will not live—cannot live." An understanding teacher saved her by giving her the love which all these extravagances betokened the need of. "I will be worthy of it," she promised, "nor betray the trust, nor resent injury more." And seven years later she wrote to this teacher: "Can I ever forget that to your treatment in that crisis of youth I owe true life—the love of Truth and Honor."

She returned to her father's home in Cambridge and devoted herself to study. Rising at five in the morning, she worked till eleven at night, with intervals for walking and piano playing. She was studying French and Italian, learning Greek, and "making acquaintance with metaphysics"—all, as she says, with a "gladiatorial disposition." She had "made up her mind to be bright and ugly." And she was "determined on distinction," but it was to be a distinction that included social success. "I see multitudes of examples of persons

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of genius utterly deficient in grace and the power of pleasurable excitement," she wrote at fifteen. "I wish to combine both. I know the obstacles in my way. I am wanting in that intuitive tact and polish which nature has bestowed upon some, but which I must acquire. And, on the other hand, my powers of intellect, though sufficient, I suppose, are not well disciplined. Yet all such hindrance may be overcome by an ardent spirit." She set herself to overcome them by means of the device which her father had given her—by intellectuality—and the harder she tried the less she succeeded. The young college men of Cambridge found her "too dashing, too aggressive, too talkative," Katherine Anthony says. She achieved friendship, but not love. She developed "an immense appetite for social intercourse," says Higginson; she made a reputation as a brilliant conversationalist, and she won life-long friends, but she did not find the Romeo whom she was unconsciously seeking in order to satisfy her instinctive need for romantic love and beauty.

Her search for him brought out in her those characteristics of sympathy and insight which made her so delightful to her contemporaries. "Persons were her game," Emerson wrote of her, "especially if marked by fortune or character or success. . . . The inveterate recluse, the coyest maid, the waywardest poet, made no resistance, but yielded at discretion as if he had been waiting for her. . . . She drew her companions to surprising confessions. She was the wedding guest to whom the long-pent story must be told; and they were not less struck, on reflection, at the suddenness of the friendship which had established in one day new and permanent covenants. She extorted the secret of life which cannot be told without setting mind and heart in a glow. . . . With the firmest tact she led the discourse

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into the midst of their daily living and working, recognizing the good will and sincerity which each man has in his aims, and treating so playfully and intellectually all the points that one seemed to see his life *en beau* and was flattered by beholding what he had found so tedious in its workaday weeds shining in glorious costume. . . . Hope seemed to spring under his feet and life was worth living. The auditor jumped for joy and thirsted for unlimited draughts. . . . Her influence was ever ennobling and each felt that in her society he was truer, wiser, better and yet more free and happy than elsewhere." And Clarke wrote similarly: "How she did glorify life to all—all that was tame and common vanishing away in the picturesque light thrown over the most familiar things by her rapid fancy, her brilliant wit, her sharp insight, her creative imagination, by the inexhaustible resources of her knowledge and by the copious rhetoric which found words and images always apt and always ready."

In this eager intercourse, she learned to know men and women. Her studies in friendship supplemented her reading of Shakespeare, Molière, and Cervantes. "These men," she notes, "were all alike in this—they loved the natural history of man. Not what he should be, but what he is, was the favorite subject of their thought. . . . It was never fancy, but always fact, that inspired them." And pursuing friends and acquaintances with the sympathetic interest that arose from her craving for affection, she saw men and women intelligently, with the eyes of a realist.

Meantime, there continued in the depths of her mind the unresolved anxiety that had afflicted her with nightmares in her childhood. Here is a characteristic record of it for Thanksgiving Day, 1831: "I was obliged to go to church or exceedingly displease my father. . . .



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The services jarred upon me. I was in a mood of most childish childlike sadness. I felt within myself great power and generosity and tenderness; but it seemed to me as if they were all unrecognized, and as if it was impossible that they should be used in life. I was one-and-twenty; the past was worthless; the future hopeless; yet I could not remember ever voluntarily to have done a wrong thing and my aspiration was very high. . . . I envied all the little children, for I supposed that they had parents who protected them, so that they could never know this strange anguish, this dread uncertainty. I knew not, then, that none could have any father but God." From this sort of soul-fear the one security is love, and she had neither a sufficient assurance of a father's love or of God's love or of any other sort of love. To a friend who related a religious experience that brought "infinite peace," she said: "I would gladly give all my talents and my knowledge for such an experience." Her religion was an indefinite Unitarianism which she described at nineteen in a letter: "I believe in Eternal Progression. I believe in a God, a Beauty and Perfection to which I am to strive all my life for assimilation. From these two articles of belief I draw the rules by which I strive to regulate my life. But though I reverence all religions as necessary to the happiness of man, I am yet ignorant of the religion of Revelation." Since this intellectual religion had no relation to her subconscious needs—except her need of Beauty—she easily sank to the depths of depression and "went about," as she said, "to cause her heart to despair of all the labor she had taken under the sun."

When her father gave up his law practice and retired to a farm forty miles from Boston, her quest of affection in friendship came to an end in a wilderness.

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Moreover, his retreat from the world was a confession of defeat that gave her confidence in him a shocking blow. She refused to take any interest in the farm, to look at his improvements, to select a spot in which he might build her a rustic seat. An "obscure emotional struggle" went on between them for two years; then she fell seriously ill and believed that she was dying. She was cured by a visit from him. "My dear," he said, "I have been thinking of you in the night; and I cannot remember you have any *faults*. You have defects, of course, as all mortals have, but I do not know that you have a single fault." On the strength of this unprecedented avowal of affection, she began at once to get well.

His death followed soon after their reconciliation, and she was plunged in remorse. "My father's image follows me constantly. Whenever I am in my room, he seems to open the door and to look on me with a complacent smile." And in her later years she recollected "how deep the anguish, how deeper still the want, with which I walked alone in hours of childish passion and called for a Father, after saying the word a hundred times, till it was stifled by sobs."

However, she promptly escaped from the farm and went to school-teaching, first in Boston and then in Providence, Rhode Island. She became a champion of Goethe, translated *Eckermann's Conversations*, and wrote a defense of the poet as an introduction to her translation. The New England feeling toward Goethe at that time was sternly disapproving. "The Puritan in me," said Emerson, "accepts no apology for bad morals in such as he." And Longfellow, in a lecture at Harvard, put it: "What I most object to in the old gentleman is his sensuality." By becoming his de-

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fender, Margaret Fuller made her first public revolt against the more prudish aspects of Puritanism.

Her subconscious revolt against repression shows again and again in her letters and her journals. "Tonight I lay on the sofa and saw how the flames shot up from beneath through the mass of coal that had been piled above. . . . And thus, I thought, is it with my life at present. Yet, if the fire beneath persists and conquers, that dead mass will become all radiant, life-giving, fit for the altar of the domestic hearth. Yes, and it shall be so." "Once I was almost all intellect, now I am almost all feeling. Nature vindicates her rights, and I feel all Italy glowing beneath the Saxon crust. This cannot last long; I shall burn to ashes if all this smolders here much longer." After hearing a Beethoven symphony, she wrote a long love letter to the dead composer, as her "only friend" who had brought her back to life. "Like a humble wife of the sage or poet, it is my triumph that I can understand and cherish thee; like a mistress, I arm thee for the fight; like a young daughter, I tenderly bind thy wounds. . . . Master, I have this summer envied the oriole which had even a swinging nest in the high bough. I have envied the least flower that came to seed, though the seed was strewn to the wind. But I envy none when I am with thee." She invented an imaginary companion whom she called "Leila." "I did not love thee, Leila," she wrote, "but the desire for love was soothed in thy presence." Like Socrates and Goethe, she cultivated a *dæmon* that was a sort of fanciful impersonation of her subconscious mind. "In genius and in character," she wrote of the demoniacal, "it works instinctively; it refuses to be analyzed by the understanding and is most of all inaccessible to the person who has it."

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She escaped from these solitary fancies and self-cheatings by identifying her own needs and her own revolts with the needs and revolts of all women. She became a champion of woman's rights, but not, like Julia Ward Howe, because she felt the oppressive restraint of man's domination, nor, like Anna Howard Shaw, out of resentment and antagonism to men. Her revolt was the issue of her robust egotism demanding unlimited opportunity, urged on by her rebellious instincts.

She grew dissatisfied with Emerson and the Transcendentalists. She wrote of him to a friend: "Leave him in his cell affirming absolute truth, protesting against humanity if he so appears to do, the calm observer of the course of things." She complained of him: "He met men, not as a brother, but as a critic." And she reproached him with the charge: "The deepest love that approached you was, in your eyes, nothing but a magic lantern, always bringing out pretty shows of life"—as if in an unconscious confession of the affection that she had brought him and of her dissatisfaction with the way he had received it. She refused to join in the "Brook Farm" experiment in communism with which her name has been associated by Hawthorne in his *Blithedale Romance*. She went traveling in the Western states, wrote a book of her experiences, and, on the strength of her travel articles, was invited by Horace Greeley to join the staff of the *New York Tribune*.

It was here that she met James Nathan and wrote to him the illuminating love letters which he published after her death. He was a German, and her admiration for Goethe must have predisposed her to friendliness. He was a Jew, and she acknowledged in her first note a curiosity about "your race" that made her welcome



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him. "I did not expect," she said, "so gentle and civilized an apparition and with blue eyes." He played the guitar to her, quoted poetry, persuaded her that he could read her thoughts, and complained of the sordidness of his business life in the city. He seems to have begun their intimacy in the rôle of an ardent pupil of the romantic school of German moonshine, and she found him full of "feminine sweetness and sensibility." Then he made the advances of a continental lover, but she proved to be no George Sand. It was not "an act of Providence," she wrote him, "but of some ill demon, that exposed me to what was to every worthy and womanly feeling so humiliating." She wept on the street. He pleaded that there was in him "both a lower and a higher" nature than she was aware of. She would have nothing but the higher, but she expressed herself in terms of mystic passion that continually misled him, and their intercourse continued as a tragic-comedy of cross-purposes and misunderstandings, in which he kept wing with her high-flown moods inadequately and fell and rose in her estimation, laboring heavily.

He seems to have run away to Europe at last, to escape her; but he continued to write her, and to let her write him, love letters; he used her to sell newspaper articles for him to the *Tribune* while he was abroad; he procured letters from Washington through her influence; and, in the last letter that she answered, he applied to her for help in getting a travel book published in America. Only when she arrived in London, expecting to meet him, did he send her word that he was engaged to marry a German girl. She answered that letter with a contemptuous verbal message that she was too busy "to allow her mind a moment's repose to reply to it." She wrote in her diary, bitterly: "I understand

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more and more the character of the tribes. I shall write a sketch of it and turn the whole to account in a literary way, since the affections and ideal hopes are so unproductive. I care not. I am resolved to take such disappointments more lightly than I have. I ought not to regret having thought other of 'humans' than they deserve."

As the final act of a perfect gentleman, Nathan prepared for publication the letters in which her flattering passion for him shows him basking in what he calls "the soft and tender emotions of a true woman's heart." After learning of his engagement, she went to Italy; she was shipwrecked on her way back to America; and at the end of his introduction to the volume of her letters he touches on his duplicity and her tragedy in one final gem of a sentence: "After these letters were written she, in London, found letters, and then went to Rome and to Heaven, but the mutually much longed for meeting is yet to be, somewhere! somehow!"

When you consider to whom her letters were written, they are almost too pathetically self-deluded to be read critically. But they are a striking illustration of that romantic self-deception about love to which we have referred as the most typical delusion of the American woman brought up in the Puritan tradition. Margaret Fuller, for all her realism, faced few facts in her affair with Nathan, no matter how intelligently she wrote of the sex instinct in her feminist book. She knew her own need, and the source of it, for she wrote to Nathan, "as a child never finding repose on the bosom of love, I seek it now childishly, perhaps." But, for her, love could have no conscious acquaintance with the instinct in which it is rooted. "Dante and Petrarch," she tells him, "though they truly loved, did not keep themselves sacred to the celestial Venus, but

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turned aside in hours of weakness to a lower love. Michelangelo alone was true to his idea of love, even when he could not hope the possession of its object." She insisted upon having nothing but "the godlike in man" and "the angellike in woman" in her relations with Nathan. He was to be "the brother of my soul" to her, and she was to be "the sister of your soul" to him. He had told her that he did not wish to marry her. There were "barriers." She complained that it was "a waste of this heavenly day" to talk about "these barriers that keep us apart." "Better to forget them!" she wrote. "Better be blest in affinities while we may! . . . You talk to me with such cold wisdom sometimes, I do not know the brother of my soul."

One can picture the European Nathan reading, with a vague bewilderment in his blue eyes, such sentences as these from one of her final letters to him:—"Hast thou ceased to cherish me, O Israel! I have felt, these last four days, a desire for you that amounted almost to anguish. . . . I do not know what has been or is in your mind. How unnatural! for such ignorance and darkness to follow on such close communion, such cold eclipse on so sweet a morning. Is it the will of the Angels? Have they drawn the veil between us and given us other duties, other ties?"

He must have been engaged to the German girl by the time he received that letter. She heard of his engagement in September, 1846. In May, 1847, she met Ossoli in Rome, and her subconscious fate had found her.

She was "intoxicated" to be there, in the Rome of her dreams. It was spring and "the weather was beautiful." Ossoli was as handsome as Romeo; an American sculptor had declared him "the most beautiful man he had ever seen." He reminded her of her favorite

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brother, Eugene; and, as Katherine Anthony points out, for him she probably "restored a long-cherished maternal image." She wrote of him to her mother, "He has, I think, even a more holy feeling about a mother, from having lost his own when very small. It has been a life-long want with him." She supplied the want. And he was, for her, all the beauty and romance that she had longed for in the garden of her childhood.

Before the year was ended she knew that she was to have a child. She recalled the spring of their meeting in a letter to a friend, describing her intoxication and her condition of "passive, childlike well-being." "That is all over now," she continued, "and, with this year, I enter upon a sphere of my destiny so different that I at present see no way out except through the gate of death." And this idea of death, as the only escape from her difficulties, persisted. She did not tell her friend what had happened. "It is useless to write of it; you are at a distance and cannot help me—whether accident or angel will, I have no intimation. I have no reason to hope I shall not reap what I have sown, and do not. Yet how I shall endure it I cannot guess; it is all a dark, sad enigma. The beautiful forms of art charm no more, and a love, in which there is all fondness but no help, flatters in vain." Ossoli was penniless; he was a Catholic, and his marriage to an American Protestant would imperil an inheritance from his father. Apparently, no formal marriage ceremony was ever performed. Their marriage certificate consisted of a document written in Latin and signed by a priest, declaring that their child, Angelo Eugene Ossoli, was the legal heir to his father's title and estates.

Ossoli had evidently some hope of improving his fortunes by the aid of the revolutionary party in Rome, but that hope was ended when the French troops forced



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the surrender of the city and crushed the revolt. There was nothing now left for his wife but to take him and their child to America, where she could perhaps support them both. She wrote her mother: "You will not admit for me—as I do not for myself—the rights of the social inquisition of the United States to know all the details of my affairs. If my mother is content, if Ossoli and I are content, if our child, when grown up, shall be content, that is enough." But there were too many "if's" in the prospect. She was worried about the deceit that would be necessary to conceal the truth concerning her marriage. "Nature keeps so many secrets," she wrote in this connection, "that I had supposed the moral writers exaggerated the dangers and plagues of keeping them; but they cannot exaggerate." She worried about her child's future. "I am become indeed a miserable coward for the sake of Angelino. I fear heat and cold, fear the voyage, fear biting poverty." She was so much older than her husband that she feared the loss of his love. "I do not know whether he will always love me so well, for I am the elder, and the difference will become, in a few years, more perceptible than now." She had every cause to fear her reception in America, where the scandal of her "socialist marriage, without the external ceremony," was already being whispered around, and all those who had resented her criticisms of their conventions were waiting to put her in the pillory. "I think," she wrote, "there will remain for me a sufficient number of friends to keep my heart warm and to help me earn my bread."

Burdened by all these fears together, she went aboard the ship with forebodings and premonitions of disaster that were afterwards regarded as prophetic. It is more probable that her premonitions were, like Lincoln's, the product of an almost conscious death-wish. "In case of

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mishap," she wrote, "I shall perish with my husband and my child, and we may be transferred to some happier state." When it appeared that the child had caught the smallpox, she wrote from Gibraltar: "It is vain by prudence to evade the stern assaults of destiny. I submit." And when the ship ran aground on a sandbar off Fire Island, in a gale, her mood of submission paralyzed her and frustrated all efforts to save her or the others of her party. Subconsciously, she committed suicide, unable to face the problems ahead of her. "Stricken with a passivity which was afterward described as Christian fortitude," Katherine Anthony says, "she awaited the end." A sailor at the last moment seized the baby from her arms and tried to swim ashore with it. His dead body and the child's were washed up on the sand. Neither her body nor Ossoli's was found.

There sank with her the manuscript of her history of the Roman revolution which was to have been her best work. Her "marriage certificate" was also lost, and her New England friends were now free to plead lack of evidence before that social inquisition which she had feared. They brought out a memoir of her to which the Brownings, who had known her in Italy, and Mazzini, with whom she had gone through the revolution, were to have contributed reminiscences of her days in Rome, and their manuscripts were sent to America, but they were never published—probably because Emerson and her New England friends found them too frank about her relations with Ossoli. All references to her marriage were made conventional, and she was Puritanically embalmed to fame in complete respectability and the title of Marchesa Ossoli.

Of her book on the Roman revolution, Mrs. Browning has said, "It would have been more equal to her

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faculties than anything she had ever yet produced." And perhaps if she had lived her genius would now have really come through that "thick curtain of available intellect" in which it had been smothered by the Puritan culture that so insisted upon the supremacy of conscious intellect and so suppressed the emotional inspiration of the subconscious. Perhaps the very ostracism to which she would have landed in America might have helped to free her. But it is doubtful. The authority against her was too crushing, and she was weakened in her resistance to it by the sense of guilt that made her seek death rather than stand trial. She would probably have continued pedantic, highly intellectual, with a passionate longing for beauty that could only show itself in her aspiration, a great critic because she was a frustrated poet.

## XIV. *In Conclusion*

IT would be difficult to find among human utterances anything to equal in subconscious magic that preamble to the American Declaration of Independence which maintains that all men are created equal and that they are equally endowed with the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Whether those sentences are true or not to intelligence, they express a powerful conviction of the human psyche—a conviction as instinctive as its belief in its own immortality. And the founders of the American republic, by basing a social system on a declaration of equality, provided a conscious philosophy for the American mind as healthfully and happily congenial to subconscious aspiration as the founders of Christianity supplied in their doctrine of the general Resurrection. No nation whose citizens do not have as certain an assurance of their individual dignity can bring to bear upon the inimical realities of life such a thrust and muscle of egoistic confrontation and attack.

Of late years, the governing classes in America have been questioning this dogma of human equality and putting out preachments against it. They seem to fear it as a belief that may encourage Bolshevism. They argue that men are born unequal in height and weight, in mental as in physical power, and hence inevitably in the possibility of success and the hope of worldly privilege—as if, in these arguments, they sought to support the inequalities of fortune in the democracy by means



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of the same doctrines of natural and divine right with which the older nations have supported their inequalities of rank. Such a tendency looks to the psychologist like a dangerous failure in American development.

It has both a subconscious and an economic origin. The uniquely American evolution of intellect has been due to its use as an instrument to extract material prosperity from environment. As a biological adaptation of the human organism to the conquest of that sort of reality, the American development has reached the highest point in the history of mankind. It has, however, produced an individual who has become too self-centered—self-centered both in himself and in his family, and, by an extension of his ego, including merely his special group and his “special interest.” What was a virtue in pioneer life—the intense concentration of the individual on his individual problem—has become a vice in the herd. The pioneer’s use of the government as an adjunct to his special interest and his co-operation to that end with other individuals of the same interest is no longer innocent of evil. Assisted by the lack of a sense of social responsibility in Puritan tradition, it has impaired his herd instinct.

And the failure in his herd instinct has been assisted by a change in the herd. The pioneers obtained labor by “changing works,” and if the less successful became “hired hands” they still remained freemen with the hope of ultimate equality in fortune. As laborers, these American freemen maintained their rights. They had that hatred of domination which would have checked the exploiting employer. He would have been compelled to carry them along with him in some semifeudal relation as a body of laboring retainers—as he did, for example, along the New England coastline, where the great shipowner in the foreign trade was a sort of

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overlord with freemen as laborers. But the Civil War drained the American labor market and drew in a great stream of foreign labor and forced an increased invention of labor-saving machinery. The first of the great American fortunes began there—with gold-digging in California, iron and copper mining around Lake Superior, smelting in Ohio, oil-refining, the invention of the telegraph and the sewing machine, and agricultural and boat-making machines, and the building of the railroads. Monopoly also began. And combinations of capital—to secure rebates and to arrange price agreements—entered politics to obtain lower taxes and a higher protective tariff.

The returned soldier of the Civil War found himself, as a workingman, in competition with the emigrant and the negro. He had resented conscription and the favoritism and profiteering that were incident to the war; he came back to work with a hatred of the wealthy class much like the hatred with which the soldier returned from the war against Germany. He became bitterly class conscious. He saw himself cut off from the hope of ever entering the ranks of the rich. Said the *Workingman's Advocate* of September 1, 1866: "The hope that the workingman may enter this circle is a glittering delusion held up before him to distract his attention from the real object of his interest."

Then, with the panic of 1873, small businesses were forced by bankruptcy into the hands of the more powerful combinations. Stockholders and directors replaced managing owners and destroyed the last of the old relation between the laborer and the patron employer. The new manager was unable to meet the fair demands of labor because he was himself only the employee of an absent directorate. There was a chasm between

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capital and labor that promoted misunderstanding and increased hate.

The captain of industry who had once exploited natural resources now exploited labor. And it was largely a foreign labor outside his herd consciousness. Unlike the sagacious Carnegie, he employed strike-breaking methods that bred violence, and he replied to hatred and envy with hatred and contempt. The laborer's hatred of the American capitalist to-day, reinforced by the accumulated hates of the recent war, has reached an intensity that is resolvable by no device of law or justice. The attempt to convince him that he is born to inequality and that the preamble of the Declaration of Independence is false—no matter whether it is false or not—appears to the psychologist to be a dangerous offense against the subconscious genius of the American mind. The solution of the problem seems rather to lie in the awakening of what we have called the prosperity type of American to his duty to the herd.

Already, as soon as success gives him leisure, he turns to offer benefactions to his small-town birthplace; and this is not merely an act of vanity; it is a blind desire to move toward the herd. If America in the large can be made in his eyes only a wider extension of his small town, the happiness of the American people as a whole can be set up as the object of his philanthropic interest and he can be saved from a personal unhappiness that is producing a national disaster.

To this salvation of the prosperity type of American, the intellectual is at present far from contributing. He is, for the most part, an intellectual by virtue of an early revolt against the prosperity type. He bases his superiority upon the feeling that the business man is not intellectual—blind to the fact that the business man has a highly specialized intellect. The ignorance

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of the successful American is the favorite butt of his satire. He crusades against the materialism of the successful man and the smugness of the small town with a rancorous fervor. To the psychologist it seems evident that his crusade will fail. He is running counter to a folk-way, and he might as well campaign against a climate. The American small town is the inevitable result of Puritan culture overcoming environmental realities; its ideals are the weapons with which it has won its victory; and it cannot be helped in its continued struggle by taking its weapons away from it and giving it nothing to replace them but a love of the nude or a passion for *vers libre*. The common intellectual critic in America, and particularly the critic who has turned reformer, is opposing the genius of the American mind when he attacks the practical materialism of the typical community. It is useless for the idealist to preach against the making of money; he will be wiser to inculcate idealism in the spending of it. If the successful young business man could be made to feel that as soon as he is safe in prosperity his next natural goal of effort should be to join in making America happy, there would soon be a cultural development that would enlist all the intellectual efforts of the American artists and idealists joyfully.

On the other hand, it seems just as futile for cynical realism to attack the Puritan American's belief in ideal and romantic love, or for scientific materialism to attempt to destroy his belief in immortality. It may be possible for the European mind to accept love as a sex instinct solely; in the American subconsciousness the sex instinct, for whatever reason, is surely involved with the instinct of affection—with the desire to protect and to be protected—in a way that greatly complicates and idealizes the sex emotion. Moreover, ro-



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mantic love and marriage (though they may be illusions), and moral idealism and reputation as guaranties of immortality (though they may have arisen as devices to escape soul-fear), have obviously resulted in such satisfactions to the American subconscious that it now clings to them indissolubly. When an American gives up his belief in romantic love and spiritual immortality he commonly suffers with a despair more destructive than his original terror of sin. And it is possible that the conventionalities of the American small town have been so impervious to intellectual attack because they protect the subconscious wish from a reduction of love to a mere mating instinct and the termination of the soul life in the grave.

Certainly, the Freudian psychanalysis, with its emphasis on sex, is rapidly falling into disrepute in America, although it was at first welcomed so eagerly by the Puritanically sex-suppressed. The recent fiction that has been written in terms of the Freudian psychology is arousing an opposition that threatens to end in an American censorship of literature. The theory of evolution, apparently because it is thought inimical to the belief in immortality, is being banished from college class rooms by popular decree. It is as if Puritanism had made an alliance with the subconscious in America so powerful that neither art nor science can prevail against it.

Perhaps both art and science will have to recognize in the American mind—if not, indeed, in the minds of all men—a religious instinct that cannot be happily repressed any more than any other instinct. To take it in its lowest terms, a child is born with the inherited capacity to show fear in response to certain sensations—the sensations of a startling noise, of capture by strange clutches, of slipping from secure grasps.

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Merely painful sensations cause a change of posture; terrifying sensations produce movements of the whole body in escape. To exclude the supernatural from the range of instinctive fear, it would be necessary that every terrifying sensation should be at once related to a concrete human or natural cause, and this is impossible because the guardians and teachers of the child do not themselves relate all terrifying sensations to human or natural causes. They cannot. Beyond that small circle of life which can be illumined and explained by intelligence are vast and still mysterious areas which intelligence has not conquered, and so long as dangers are not all reducible to human or natural terms, so long will instinct relate them to superhuman and supernatural causes. Added to that, the child's dependence on its parents sets the subconscious mind in an attitude of dependence on a higher power, and a belief in God becomes as it were instinctive. There is evidence enough now that the belief in a higher power cannot be destroyed in the normal human being without impairing subconscious health. Many religions in the past have been almost diabolical in exploiting this subconscious tendency in terms of soul fear, but modern America is releasing itself to a faith less terrifying. Art and science, at the best, can only assist in such an allaying of excessive psychic anxiety. They cannot successfully run counter to the subconscious current.

Observe—as an excellent example of how powerful a subconscious current can be—the present-day failure of prohibition in the United States. The forces that compelled the passage of the law would seem omnipotent. They included the great body of religious abstainers who saw drunkenness as a sin, the women who saw it as a vice, the reformers who fought it as a social evil, and the employers who found it a cause of ineffi-

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ciency in their workman—so that the powers of morality, religion, and business were all united against it. They passed the law. But drunkenness is not solely a sin, a vice, a social evil, or an enemy of efficiency; it is with the psychologist calls “an escape.” The inebriate is primarily a neurotic who has failed to face his world. He escapes into phantasy, as neurotics always do; but with him the gate to phantasy is alcohol. It is the quickest, easiest, cheapest, and most accessible road to the delusion of grandeur, to the phantasied sense of power. It releases the ego instincts in the subconscious mind as it releases the sex instincts; it allows the imagination to dominate as it dominates in dreams; it is almost as true an escape from reality as falling asleep. The prohibition law undertook to close to the reality-ridden American that door of escape without giving him any substitute but the more dangerous drugs.

And the government undertook to enforce the law just when the suppressed hatred of government authority was greatest—at the end of a war when the citizens had been conscripted and taxed and regulated in a way that was exasperatingly new to the American. Patriotism had suppressed the common resentment during the war, but now the war was over. The first most outspoken opponent of prohibition was the returned soldier; the second was the laborer who saw the law as a new tyranny of his employer; they were joined by the great body of youth to whom the war had been a criminal folly that had made them skeptical of the wise power of their elders to govern the world; the intellectuals came in to the uprising with a protest against Puritanism; the rich had their cellars and the aristocratic conviction that the law was not meant for them.

Consequently, a psychological status was conferred

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upon the use of alcohol such as it had never known before. It became the gesture of revolt, the proof of courage; it gave a sort of glow of superior caste radiating from the prestige class and adding *éclat* to the lower strata of society. The traffic in alcohol, having been made criminal, fell into the hands of criminals who maintain other anti-social habits. It has been now assured as determined an existence as burglary or theft; and instead of being degraded into outlawry, it has been promoted to a sort of Robin Hood romanticism in which adolescent bravado can find healthy thrills. The law is as helpless as if it were a law against love making; and the advocates of temperance have a much more difficult cause to plead than they had when intemperance was merely a disgrace.

What has defeated temperance in America is not intelligence, but something subconscious and stronger than intelligence. The intelligent reasons for temperance are as persuasive as ever, but the subconscious revolt has temporarily swamped them. It seems evident that the same sort of deep instinctive currents are at the bottom of the American failure to solve most of the problems that we have indicated in this volume. The American mind faces the material realities of life triumphantly; it has yet to face the realities of human nature and of its own individuality with any such pragmatic skill. If it ever learns to confront facts in its life and in its art, as it has confronted them in its physical environment, it ought to produce a civilization that would make all the imagined Utopias of mankind look like the daydreams of barbarians.

THE END



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